

LIBRARY
Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

No. Case,	Division
No. Shelf,	Section
No. Book,	No.

The John M. Krebs Donation.

BS1555
S. G 275

45

THE
PROPHET DANIEL,

CONSIDERED IN A
SERIES OF LESSONS,

FOR A

SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

*Rev. L. Gaußen.
by
Gaußen*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

? 1810



ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE lessons were given at Geneva, to the children of a Sunday School. Rapidly taken down by a reporter, and afterwards corrected and written out by him alone, they necessarily bore, with the character of simplicity aimed at in giving them, that of the haste with which they were transcribed and published. They were originally lithographed.

It has been thought that they would form a useful work, were they republished, after a careful perusal and revisal. Some explanations have been added to the prophetical part, and it is hoped that such as they are, they may render a valuable service to our churches, as well in affording, in a form accessible to all, an exposition of one of the most important of the books of prophecy; as in presenting to our pastors, a sample of that kind of popular instruction which has been adopted with such happy success, in

Sunday Schools in England, and in the Protestant countries of Switzerland.

The explanation, which is always preceded by a hymn and prayer, is sometimes interrupted by questions addressed to the children, or by the reading of the passages in the Bible referred to.

The verses for each Sunday should be learned by heart: they seldom exceed the number of ten. The boys repeat them, before the commencement of the lesson, to the gentleman who presides over their form, and the girls to the ladies, who have the superintendence of them. All are required to bring their Bibles, and when a passage is adverted to, the first who finds it out, stands up and reads it.

We have entered into these details for the purpose of giving some directions to those friends of the gospel, who may think of promoting such a method of instruction in our churches, and also of justifying to the reader of these pages, the form in which they appear. For he will find in them, from time to time, the questions of the minister and the answers of the children, as they were taken

down by the reporter, and sometimes also the hymn and prayer, with which the lesson began. We have thought it better thus to allow these extracts to retain their natural and primitive simplicity.

Should this publication meet with a success answerable to our hopes, we propose, with the Divine assistance, to publish other lessons of the same catechist,* on Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, and the prophet Jonah.

It has been the object of the translator, to condense the present valuable and interesting work into as small a compass as possible, as well for the purpose of bringing it within the reach of those to whom its price might have been an objection, as of inducing those to read it, who might have been deterred by the appearance of its bulk. For this purpose he has merely indicated, by the chapter and verse, the passages of Scripture, which form the subject of the several lessons, instead of quoting them at full length; and most of the longer quotations throughout the work, are given in the same way. The reader is therefore requested to look out for them himself

* The Rev. L. Gaussem, of Geneva.

in his Bible, as they will frequently be found necessary for understanding the subsequent explanations. Some of the recapitulations, at the commencement of the lessons, and other repetitions, occurring in the body of them, which were proper, for impressing on the minds of the children to whom they were originally given, the subjects under discussion, are considerably curtailed, and sometimes altogether omitted, as being less necessary in a printed book, where the reader has an opportunity of referring, from time to time, to the ground which he has already gone over; a few passages of local nature, and not immediately connected with the subject of the work, have been suppressed; and others, which were considered unnecessarily diffuse, have been condensed. Such are the chief abbreviations which have been adopted, and it is hoped that they will not be found materially to detract from the interest or usefulness of the volume itself.

THE PROPHET DANIEL.

FIRST LESSON.

DANIEL i. 1—9.

LET us begin this lecture in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Dear children, we are about to commence this day the study of the sacred book of Daniel, and I expect your most devout attention. I hope to read it in the countenance of each of you ; I hope to see your eyes fixed with reverence on him who speaks to you ; for he is going to explain the oracles of God.

At the same time, while I myself open before you this ancient and sacred book of prophecy, I shall lift up my thoughts and my prayers to that God who dictated it by his Spirit to his servant Daniel, and I shall supplicate him to vouchsafe to us all, this day, the assistance of that same Spirit ; to me, that I may be enabled to enter into its real meaning ; to you, that you may be able to understand it ; and to our brethren here, that they may be edified by it ; in a word, to all,

that we may learn to pray as Daniel prayed ; to love Jesus, as Daniel loved him ; to humble ourselves, to believe, to obey, to surrender ourselves up to him, as that prophet, whom the scripture calls “a man greatly beloved” of God, was taught, from his earliest years to do.

Indeed, my friends, one of my principal reasons for choosing the book of Daniel as the subject of our meditations was, because the Bible represents this prophet as pious from his tenderest youth. I thought that the life and writings of this man of God could not fail to have a peculiar interest in your eyes, when you learned that at the early age of twelve, he had turned his youthful heart towards heaven, in the midst of his afflictions, and had given himself up unreservedly to the service of his heavenly Father.

It is generally supposed that Daniel had not yet reached his fourteenth or fifteenth year, when the king of Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem, put to death a part of his family, and reduced him to slavery. At this tender age he was weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and was not found wanting. The Lord tried him, and he showed himself faithful. He saw the hosts of the Chaldeans arrive before the city of his fathers ; he witnessed all the horrors of a protracted siege ; part of the royal family were made prisoners ; and he himself was carried away captive, far

from the land of his infancy, into a country of idolaters and a house of bondage, among a people of a strange tongue.

And this, my dear children, must have been much more painful to Daniel than it would have been to you, for example, and many others ; because he belonged to a race of kings. You can conceive what would be your feelings if a foreign army, after laying our city in ruins and putting its inhabitants to death, were to take some of you, and loading you with chains, to carry you away into some remote part of Austria, Poland, or Siberia, there to be employed as slaves in the service of strange masters. But to Daniel this was much more dreadful. He had passed his life in the midst of pomp and luxury ; and, young as he was, he was accustomed to receive every mark of homage and respect ; he was the offspring of kings ; the great Hezekiah was his ancestor.—Who could have thought, a short time before the coming of the Babylonians, that this young person, so amiable and so loved, would be called at such an early age to endure the most frightful reverses of fortune, and the most violent storms of life ?

But here, before we proceed further, permit me to make one observation. You remember what I said to you, some weeks ago, in speaking of the sin of Achan, and the punishment of the whole people of Is-

rael before the walls of Ai. I observed that God, in his dealings with families in this world, was sometimes pleased to permit the children to bear the iniquity of their fathers. Well, then, here you behold the young Daniel carried as a captive into the country of Shinar ; and thus was accomplished, in the person of this amiable youth, the judgment which the Lord had long before denounced against his forefather, Hezekiah.

Hezekiah, king of Judah, had become sick of a mortal disease. Laid upon a bed of suffering, and desiring exceedingly to be restored, he turned his face to the wall, and with many tears poured out his heart in fervent supplications. The Lord heard and answered him ; and in his great mercy, promised by the mouth of his prophet, to add fifteen years to his life. Soon after his recovery, however, he fell into a sin which appeared very grievous in the eyes of God. The king of Babylon, a great warrior, who lived at a distance of 600 miles from him, sent ambassadors to congratulate him on his restoration. Hezekiah, who was little more than convalescent, left his room to conduct the ambassadors through his palace, and to show them all his treasures. Had we been there, we would probably have gone through the royal apartments, and the chambers of the house of God, with the envoys of the Babylonian king, and have admired the ves-

sels of gold and all the magnificence of Hezekiah, without perceiving that his heart was guilty of any great offence. A man often commits sins which do not appear to the eyes of others, because they are sins of thought, and because God alone knows the conscience and the heart. But it would seem there existed in the mind of this prince, on his recovering from his illness, a feeling of pride and ingratitude, which the Almighty alone knew, and which was supremely displeasing to him. God looks not, like us, at the outward appearance, but at the heart; and in every judgment which he forms of us, he takes account of the favours which we have received. Hence, the Lord declared, that the sin of Hezekiah should not pass unpunished; but that, to give a striking lesson to his country, his family, and future ages, all his treasures should shortly be carried away by the king of Babylon, and his sons themselves become eunuchs and slaves to these foreign princes.

Read the thirty-ninth chapter of Isaiah for me. (One of the children reads.)

It was thus, then, that young Daniel was called to bear the iniquity of his father.—But was there any injustice in this dispensation of God?

No.

I told you a short time ago, in speaking of the sin of Achan, what children ought to say,

when they find themselves in unhappy circumstances, through the misconduct of a parent, or of some distant ancestor. Do you remember what it was?

They ought to say three things.

And what is the first?

O my God! I am indeed very miserable; but I deserve to be a thousand times more miserable for my own sins.

Yes; and in this point of view Daniel had reason to say: O God! I have no right to complain, for I am a sinner; thou sendest me into Chaldea, but it is to hell I have deserved to go, for my iniquities; and yet thou hast delivered me from it; thou hast been merciful unto me! And such will be the first feeling of the Christian when he suffers through the fault of another; he will begin by humbling himself; he will take a view of all his past ingratitude, all his past transgressions; he will receive whatever is sent to him, as coming from the hand of God, ever full of justice as of mercy. But tell me what is the second reflection.

O my God! I am indeed in trouble; but thou, I trust, wilt make my affliction turn to my soul's good.

Yes; and often we are most blessed when we are most deeply afflicted. It is then that we are most disposed to serious reflection; it is then that we open our Bibles, and feel that in them is our treasure and our refuge. It is

then we learn humility, cultivate the spirit of prayer, and say, with David : “ Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin.” And thus it was with Daniel.

Yes ; never was a young man more blessed of God than he was in a strange land. He became, in his captivity, as I shall presently show you, the holiest of the servants of God. He received his affliction with prayer to the Almighty, that it might be sanctified to him ; and at the last day, doubtless, he will have reason to adore the divine mercy for those years of sorrow, more than for all those of his prosperity. But tell me now, what is the third reflection, which the Christian ought to make, when he finds himself in circumstances like those of Daniel.

O God ! though I am now very unhappy, yet thou wilt comfort me in a few days.

Yes ; truly, my children ! Yet a little while, and Jesus shall come and wipe away all tears from our eyes. He cometh ; his reward is with him ; and the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in the children of God.

Are we to be for ever in this world ?

No.

Where shall we go to if we be children of God ?

To heaven.

If then heaven be our destination, we may rejoice in the midst of tribulation. If a little Swiss living in America, far off from all that was dear to him, were to be told that he should soon be brought back to his own country, to his father and mother, sisters and brothers, and all the endearments of home ; but, that in order to return to his native land, he would be obliged to embark on board a very incommodious vessel, where he would be badly fed and clothed, and exposed to a great deal of hard treatment, do you think he would feel very unhappy in that miserable vessel ? Would he wish to be out of it ? Oh, no ! but he would say to himself, I am going to my beloved country, where every joy awaits me, and every comfort will be restored to me ! Then no more tears, no more weeping, no more pain, no more sorrow ; my father, my mother, my sisters, my brothers, will wipe away all tears from my eyes.

Now remember these three reflections and these three considerations.

But before we enter into an explanation of this admirable book, I wish to show you what the scripture tells us of the character of Daniel, as this, no doubt, will dispose you to read with more reverence and attention, the predictions and actions of this extraordinary servant of God. There is not, perhaps, in the whole Bible, a person of whom the Spirit of God has spoken in more honoura-

ble terms. He is distinguished by traits, which seem to place him above all the men of ancient times, without exception. I shall mention some of them.

And first, let us open the tenth chapter. We there find the angel Gabriel, calling him "*a man greatly beloved.*" "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee. Fear not; peace be unto thee, yea, be strong."

Again, if we open the book of Ezekiel, we shall see what an astonishing respect that prophet, who, notwithstanding, was his contemporary and some years older, had for Daniel, or to speak more correctly, we shall see what an estimation the Lord himself had for his servant. See Ezekiel xxviii. 2, 3.

The prophet there rebuking the pride of the king of Tyre, says to him in the name of the Lord: "Behold, thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God. Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee!"

Now, it was of the living Daniel that the Holy Spirit declared these words; but there are others still more remarkable. Thus in Ezekiel xiv. 13—20, you will find the Lord saying: "Son of man, when the land sinneth against me—though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteous-

ness ; they should deliver neither sons nor daughters.”—What, I ask, must have been the measure of grace which filled the heart of the man of God, that the Lord should put such language into the mouth of his prophet Ezekiel, concerning him, while he was yet alive ? He associates him with the most distinguished men of prayer that ever had existed ; and to find two men in sacred history, with whom to compare him, he is obliged to go back 900 years into the past, to seek out the admirable Job ; and then 1700 years farther, to find the incomparable Noah—Noah, the man of the deluge, who alone survived an entire world. “ Though there stood before me these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, yet would I not pardon.”

Well, then, you here see what the child Daniel became. He was, it is true, greatly afflicted, in his younger days ; he was made prisoner by the cruel Chaldeans ; torn from the embraces of his parents after the taking of the city, and carried away into a strange land ; but what was the consequence ? He was led to give up his heart more entirely to the Lord ; he became more and more fond of the word of God ; he read it, studied it, prayed over it with fervency ; and God, ever faithful and true, filled him with the richest and most precious spiritual graces. If then any of you, dear children, whom I address,

are called to endure suffering or affliction, do like Daniel ; take your Bible like him, and hope in the same God.

I shall now proceed to the consideration of our verses.

“ In the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.”

It is necessary, for the right understanding of the book of Daniel, that you should be able to form a correct notion of the *place* where he abode, and of the *time* when he lived.

“ Do you know what the science, which teaches the knowledge of places, is called ?”

“ Geography.”

“ And that which treats of the knowledge of times ?”

“ Chronology.”

Well then, it is important that you should be acquainted with the geography and chronology of the book of Daniel ; and I shall, therefore, frequently direct your attention to them, during the course of these lectures.

In our last lecture, we were in the days of Joshua, as it regards *time*; and in the land of Canaan, as it regards *place*. To-day, we are, in regard to *time*, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar ; and, in regard to *place*, in the far distant country of Babylon, by the great river Euphrates. Let us speak of the time.

In my preceding lectures, I explained to

you the books of Genesis and Exodus, and, subsequently, that of Joshua. This brought us down to the period when, the children of Israel having grown up to be a great people, in Egypt, Moses was sent to deliver them ; and, after his death, that holy man Joshua was placed at their head, to lead them over Jordan, and to conduct them into the land of Canaan.

We now pass over the whole time of the Judges, of Samuel, David, Solomon, and all the Kings, until the days when the kingdom of Judah had become so corrupt and wicked, that the Lord determined to destroy Jerusalem, and to send all the Jews into captivity for seventy years, in a strange land.

The king whom the Lord selected for this purpose, was the Emperor of Babylon, who, as we shall see, was a kind of Bonaparte. But while he resolved to visit them with judgments, he prepared for them, during their bondage, a great consolation in the prophet Daniel, who was still a very young man.

To assist you in understanding the *chronology* of the book of Daniel, I have drawn up for you a table of the principal epochs in the history of the world ; and, for its *geography*, you must ask your parents at home to show you the country of Babylon (which is also called Shinar and Chaldea) on the map. You will see that it is situated on the banks

of the river Euphrates, at a great distance from Jerusalem, towards the East. Here is the chronological table. You will perceive I have set down the most important dates in round numbers.

TABLE OF DATES.

BEFORE CHRIST.	AFTER CHRIST.
Years.	Years.
4000 The Creation of Man.	14 The Emperor Cæsar Augustus dies. Tiberius succeeds him.
3000 Enoch translated.	26 Pontius Pilate made Governor of Jerusalem by Tiberius.
2250 Universal Deluge.	33 Our Lord dies upon the cross.
2000 Death of Noah— Abraham born.	68 St. Paul beheaded at Rome.
1450 Joshua passes the Jordan.	70 Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans.
1000 Solomon builds the Temple.	312 Constantine, the Roman Emperor, declares himself a Christian.
900 Elijah taken up into Heaven.	606 The Bishop of Rome receives the name of universal Pope in the West. Mahomet gives himself out as a prophet in the East.
800 Jonah prophesies.	
700 Isaiah finishes his prophecies.	
600 Daniel prophesies to the year 534.	
400 Malachi the last of the prophets.	
300 The Grecian empire is divided into four parts.	
200 The Romans begin to destroy it.	
100 Cæsar and Pompey were born.	
63 Pompey takes Jerusalem.	
40 Herod named King by the Romans.	
0 Christian Era. Birth of Jesus Christ.	

What is a century?

A hundred years.

The creation of man took place 4000 years

before Christ. How many centuries was that?

Forty.

The deluge happened in the year 2350 b. c. How many centuries was that before Christ?

Twenty-three and a-half.

The event which we next read of, is the passage of Jordan, by Joshua. How many centuries was that before Jesus Christ?

Fourteen and a-half.

We have next the foundation of the Temple. By whom was it built?

By Solomon.

Whose son was he?

David's.

What year before Christ was the temple built.

The year 1000.

Lastly, we come to the days of Daniel, and of the captivity. This is the epoch about which we are now going to read. How many years before Christ was Daniel led away captive into Babylon?

Six hundred years.

I have further noted down some of the principal events between Daniel and Jesus Christ. Pompey and Cæsar, the two greatest Roman generals, were born a century before Christ. Pompey took Jerusalem sixty-three years before Christ; and, afterwards, Cæsar having vanquished Pompey,

appointed Herod king of the Jews under the Romans.

Thus the Romans had been masters of Palestine sixty-three years, when our Lord was born ; and Jerusalem had been nearly 100 years in their power, when he died under the governor Pontius Pilate, who was a general of the Roman cavalry.

What happened in the year sixty-eight ?

St. Paul was beheaded at Rome.

And what happened in the year seventy ?

The Jews having rebelled against the Romans, the Emperor Titus destroyed their city and dispersed them over the earth.

How long has that dispersion continued ?

Nearly 1800 years.

Let us return to the explanation of our verses.

“ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, and besieged it.”

Now you must not suppose that all this happened by the will of this heathen king, or by the chances of war. It is probable, indeed, that the men of that time, on reading the news of the day, inquired, like those of our own time, when they peruse the public papers : “ What is the king of Babylon doing ? Is the city of Jerusalem strong enough to sustain a siege ? Is the Jewish army well commanded ? ” and that without looking up to

that God, “who overthroweth kings, and establisheth kings,” and of whom it is said, “the horse is prepared for the day of battle; but the Lord giveth the victory.” But hear what the scripture saith, verse 2.

It does not say, “Jehoiakim fell into the hands of the king of Babylon,” but “the Lord *gave* Jehoiakim into his hand.” And hence we are told of the celebrated David Bogue, that when he took up the papers in the time of Napoleon, to read what was passing, he would sometimes say, as he spread them out before him, “Let us see how my God governs the world.”

Thus, then, the Lord, to punish the whole Jewish nation, and to warn them, by previous humiliations, before he destroyed their city and temple, as he did nineteen years after, delivered the princes of Judah, the vessels of the temple, and the treasures of the nation, into the hands of the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar carried a part of them away with him, and as a trophy of his victory, placed them in the temple of his God.

But this was not all: to give the greater lustre to his victory, and to get into his possession so many hostages against the Jews, he commanded the governor of his household to select the noblest, most comely, and most intelligent of the Jewish youth, and to transfer them to Babylon, to serve as slaves in his

royal palace. Among those there were four more remarkable than the rest, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Their names, which are Hebrew, had all a meaning. Daniel signifies, "God is my judge;" Azariah, "the Lord is my help ;" and Hananiah, "the grace of God." But as they were now slaves of the king, Ashpenaz obliged them to assume Chaldean names; Daniel, that of Belteshazzar, and the three others, Shadrach, Meshach, and abednego.

Such, my brethren, are the ways of the Lord. Daniel was an amiable and pious youth, and his piety was the more remarkable, as the time in which he lived was one of great licentiousness and unbelief. Who would not have wondered at seeing this young prince, the hope of the nation, carried away to the court of a heathen prince? Who would not have thought that he was utterly lost? But the Lord intended this to effect great things; he designed to make use of him for the conversion of the greatest monarch upon earth; Nebuchadnezzar on his throne was to glorify God; Daniel was to govern provinces; he was to protect his people, and to bring many souls among the heathen to the knowledge of his God.

SECOND LESSON.

DANIEL i. 10—18.

THERE is a passage in the gospel of St. Luke which frequently comes to my mind, when I look upon the countenance of a child. It is that in which we are told what was said of the infant John, when he was circumcised in the temple, after the miraculous signs which accompanied the first scenes of his life : “What manner of child shall this be?” And, doubtless, this is a question which suggests itself to many of us here, when we see you taking your places on these benches, with your bibles in your hands. It is difficult, at such a moment, not to ask, “what manner of children shall these be? Shall they become real Christians? Shall they go to heaven?” True, indeed, we cannot answer such questions with entire certainty ; for “the Lord above knoweth them that are his.” Yet there is another passage which bears on this subject, and which has also often struck me. You will find it in Prov. xx. 11 :—“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.”

It is true, that God can, if he pleases, con-

vert the most hardened of his creatures ; he can change the heart of a child, and he can regenerate the hoary-headed sinner, treading on the verge of the grave ; but it is not less certain, that when we see a child, who has turned his young heart to God ; when we find him submitting to the authority of the Bible ; when we have reason to believe, that his conscience looks not merely to men, but to God ; that when he has done wrong, he weeps, not because he fears punishment, or the shame of detection, but because he has offended God—then, I think, we may say, almost with certainty, here is one of the elect ; here is an angel in the cradle ; here is an immortal being, who shall one day have his place in heaven among the angels of God. Do we not see the Spirit of God already working upon his youthful conscience, and preparing it for eternal mansions ? Is not this child already known by his doings ?—Now, thus it was with Daniel. We see him from his earlier days turning with all his heart to the Lord, and we see him, at the same time, experiencing in his own person the truth of those words, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,” and “he chooseth his people in the furnace of affliction.” While a mere youth, he is exposed to the severest trials, he is torn from the arms of his parents, and carried away captive into a foreign land. But the love of God was in his heart ; he

had given himself up to him ; and you will see that his whole desire was to manifest to him that faithfulness which he felt he owed him.

“He purposed” something “in his heart,” we read in verse 8.

What was his resolution, on setting out for Babylon ? Did he determine to resign himself to despair ? No ! he had faith. Did he at least resolve to seek amusements, amid the pomps and pleasures of that sumptuous metropolis ? No ! he had lost his father and mother, but he could lift up his heart to God and say, Thou, O my God, wilt be a father to me ! And as we read in that verse which we have just repeated, (8,) “he purposed in his heart,” whatever might be the consequences, “not to defile himself,” but to be faithful to the Lord, and to seek his consolation in him alone. I imagine I see the amiable and noble youth travelling, in the midst of his guards, to Chaldea, with a few tears, perhaps, in his eyes, but with resignation and peace in his soul, serenity in his countenance, and adoration and prayer on his lips. I see him recalling to mind, and repeating the psalms of his ancestor, David, “If thy law had not been my delight, I had perished in mine affliction ; but I have taken thy testimonies for mine heritage : they are the joy of my heart.” “When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.”

Yes, "O my God, thou art my Father thou art my hiding-place, thou art my consolation ; thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance !"

My dear children, if any of you should be so unhappy as to lose your father or mother, or both, (and I have known such cases,) oh ! do as Daniel did ; in your affliction, remember the young prophet in Babylon ; like him, place all your happiness, your hope, your strength, in being a child of God, by faith in Jesus Christ ! Say, like him, My God, thou art my Father ! Art thou not our God ; and hast thou not said, "Like as a father pitith his children, even so the Lord pitith them that fear him ?"

But observe attentively what is said in ver. 8. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank : therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." Mark especially these words : "he purposed in his heart." This poor young man, having no one to open his mind to, being surrounded only with armed guards, strangers, and heathens, *purposed* in his heart to take the Lord for his portion, and in all things to show himself a faithful child of God.

It is true, indeed, that it is not what we eat and drink that defiles or purifies us ; "the

kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Why, then, it may be asked, did Daniel refuse “to eat the portion of the king’s meat, and to drink the wine which he drank?” It was that the delicate meats which were served upon the table of the monarch, and the luscious wines which were poured into his cup, were all consecrated to his false gods, before they came into the royal banqueting-room. Hence, Daniel could not have partaken of them without appearing like a child of the world, a heathen, and an idolater; without having fellowship with the idols of Babylon, and defiling himself. Though “meek and humble,” “he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.” He determined to let it be known, from the moment of his arrival in Chaldea, that though but a young slave, he was a servant of the living God.

How touching is this conduct of Daniel, especially when we consider the society in which he was obliged to live! The great men of Babylon were almost all persons of immoral character; but here we see, in the midst of them, a mere youth, a young slave, who has treasured up the word of God in his heart, who will have no part with idols, and who seeks to place himself, as much as possible, out of the temptations and dangers to which, from his situation, he is about to be

exposed. Daniel desired to keep himself pure before his God ; and hence, as you shall see, his God kept him, and crowned him with the richest blessings. He was a young Nathanael—" he was an Israelite indeed." You remember that Nathanael, who retired under a fig-tree to purpose in his heart that he would give himself up to God, and you know what the Lord said to him : " Nathanael, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Well, then, so it was with Daniel ; he saw him, when under some tree, in the open fields, as he was going to Babylon, or in some private closet in the palace, he purposed in his heart that he would live faithfully to his God.—Dear children, go and do likewise.

But before we go further, let us consider what was implied in this resolution.

First.—It showed, that when he was called upon to profess his faith, he feared neither the reproach nor the ridicule of men. He could say : True, I am only a poor young slave ; but they shall know that I worship the living God, him whom the Babylonians blaspheme and deride, and whose sanctuary at Jerusalem they have burned. Now, my dear children, a young child, here or anywhere else, ought to be what Daniel was at Babylon ; he ought to show, without hesitation, that he fears God, and desires to keep his commandments. For, whosoever shall

be ashamed of Jesus and of his word, before this wicked and perverse generation, of him shall he be ashamed before his Father and the holy angels.

Secondly.—Daniel had reason to apprehend that his resolution would be considered as a gross insult to the king of Babylon. Conceive a young slave, who is honoured with a portion of meat from the royal table, refusing to accept it, and demanding to live on pulse and water! And why this refusal? He fears to defile himself. Certainly such conduct in a young man, otherwise meek and respectful, manifested an admirable courage and decision of character.

Thirdly.—How exemplary was this determination to live only on “pulse and water,” amid all the luxury of the court of Babylon, in a young man hitherto brought up in a royal palace! How different from the conduct of many children, who do not hesitate to disobey their parents, to give way to ill-humour, and sometimes even to have recourse to falsehood, for the sake of gratifying their miserable appetites! How often have I seen children tease and importune those about them, and cry for this or that dainty, while Daniel *requested* that he might not eat the meat from the king’s table! “I pray you,” said Daniel, “let me eat only pulse, and drink only water, for three years! God will be with me; and I shall not sin against him.” Such

is the strength which faith gives to the child who puts his trust in the Lord.

Fourthly.—Daniel did not fear even death; for by his refusal he exposed himself to it. The king of Babylon, like all the Eastern monarchs, could cut off the head of any of his subjects who offended him, as easily as a child would strike off the heads of the poppies in his garden. But the true Christian fears not death—he “fears not them that kill the body,” because “he regards him who has power to cast both soul and body into hell !”

Such was the conduct of Daniel; let us now see how it was rewarded.

We are told that the Lord inclined the hearts of all Daniel’s masters, that they should be favourable to him. When he made his request first to the prince of the eunuchs, and afterwards to Melzar, “God brought him into favour and tender love with the man,” (the Hebrew word signifies a love mingled with compassion—a cordial love.) Such were the feelings which the Lord put into the heart of this officer, who, probably, was a man of stern character, but who was touched with a tender affection when he saw the meekness, amiability, and docility of this young Israelite. For, mistake not! Daniel had, indeed, *purposed* in his heart to die, rather than sin against God. But suppose not that he cherished a gloomy

and austere piety, which piqued itself upon a proud and disdainful strictness, and that he made no account of his superiors. No ; we see, on the contrary, that “he requested, he besought,” the prince of the eunuchs. I beseech thee, compel me not to eat what is against my conscience. I beseech thee ! God was favourable to him ; God inclined the heart of this man ; and he obtained his desire.

And here, my dear children, we learn an important lesson for ourselves. We, too often, allow ourselves to be drawn into sin through the fear of man. We say, if I were now to act as you advise me, I should incur the displeasure of my friends ; I am dependent ; I cannot do as I like ; I should be cast off, forsaken ; otherwise I should fulfil such or such a duty, but I cannot turn against those whom I love, and who love me ! I cannot.—Ah ! it was not thus Daniel spoke. Above all things, said he, let God be for me ; if I have need of the favour of men, he can obtain it for me ; at all events, his is sufficient ; if God be for me, who can be against me ! It is written, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will ; and we see how, in this respect, the Lord was faithful to Daniel. He gained for him the affection, first of the prince of the eunuchs, then of Melzar, then of Nebuchadnezzar, afterwards

that of Darius, the king of the Medes, and finally, that of the great Cyrus, the king of the Persians. All hearts were disposed in his favour ; and this, the scripture tells us, was an effect of the grace and power of God.

Can you tell me the name of another youth for whom the Lord conciliated the favour of those around him, in very trying circumstances ?

Joseph, when he was in prison.

Whose affections did he gain ?

The jailer's.

And we learn that children, at all times, should seek, above everything else, the favour and love of God.

But you must not imagine that Daniel would have won the heart of his master, by merely saying, “ God is for me,” if otherwise he had displayed a haughty temper, or shown himself self-complacent, refractory, or obstinate. If God gained for him the love of men, it was by endowing him with a meek and obliging disposition, and making him humble and conscientious in the discharge of his duty. We read, “ that he was instructed in the learning and in the tongue of the Chaldeans,” and no doubt he applied himself to his studies with docility towards his masters, as well as faithfulness towards his God.

But mark here his modest meekness. We have said that he *entreated* the prince of the eunuchs to show favour to him. And when

that officer said : “ I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink : for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort ? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king ; ” Daniel said to Melzar, “ Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days ; and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee,” and thou shalt see, if by the grace of God, they be not as fat and as fair as those of the other youths who have come to the court of Babylon.

But here I must notice a circumstance, which I am sure will give you pleasure. Daniel was so full of love to his God, that he exercised a sacred influence over three of his young companions, and induced them also to live faithfully like himself. These were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. These three young men, therefore, formed the same purpose in their heart, and requested to be put to the same trial.

Now it turned out just as they had anticipated. At the end of ten days, they enjoyed such a peace in their minds, and such an inward joy, from feeling that God was their portion and their confidence, that this happiness was reflected in their countenance, and rendered them more comely, more fresh, and more pleasing than before. You are aware that they had been chosen from among the

handsomest and most noble of the Jewish youth; because the Assyrian kings, wishing to add to the lustre and magnificence of their court, admitted into their palaces none but young persons of high birth, distinguished for the gracefulness of their person, and the beauty of their countenance.

At the same time, these excellent young men, who were afterwards called to a very severe trial, (for they were cast into a burning fiery furnace,) in abstaining, like Daniel, from the pleasures of life, and from that abundance which too often enervates the heart, were preparing themselves, without knowing it, for the moment when God would prove them by painful afflictions. They came out of them “more than conquerors;” they glorified God, and at the last day, this shall be the reward of those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake. “Rejoice,” saith the Saviour, “for great is your reward in heaven.”

THIRD LESSON.

DANIEL i. 17—21; xi. 1.

LAST Sunday we were occupied in considering the resolution, the sobriety, and the pious meekness of the young Daniel, who was carried away, at so tender an age, as a captive into Babylon. We shall see to-day the recompense which his conduct received.

He had put his confidence in his heavenly Father, and chosen him as his portion in the world. O my God ! he had said, I have neither father nor mother on earth ; be thou as a father and a mother unto me ; yea, I know thou wilt be all this to me and more ! Yes, O my God ! above all things, let me have thy favour, thy love, thy grace, thy kingdom, thy righteousness ! And we see that God did protect and bless him, in all his ways ; that he prospered him in his first studies, gave him understanding, and skill in all learning ; besides, he put into his heart wisdom, that wisdom which cometh from above ; even endowed him with miraculous powers, so that at the early age of eighteen, he became eminent over the whole world ; and gained for him the affection of the most

powerful monarch of antiquity, the great Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

But before we enter upon the exposition of the first part of the passage before us, I would notice what is said of Daniel, in the last verse of chapter i., because that will enable us to form some idea of the very tender age of this admirable youth, when he was carried in chains to Babylon. He could not have been more than from twelve to fifteen years of age at the time; for, from the verse in question, and the first verse of chapter x., it appears that he was still alive seventy-three years after; so that if he was fifteen at the taking of Jerusalem, he must have reached his eighty-eighth or ninetieth year before his death.

In the 21st verse of chapter i., we read that Daniel "continued at Babylon, even to the first year of Cyrus." Now, the Babylonish captivity, which began when Daniel was taken, and ended on the accession of Cyrus, lasted seventy years; so that if Daniel was thirteen or fifteen years when he was made prisoner, he must have been eighty-three or eighty-five when he retired from the court.

But, further, we read in chapter x. 1, that he had a miraculous vision "in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia," when the Lord appeared to him by the side of the river

Hiddekel. Hence, supposing him to have been thirteen or fifteen at the commencement of the captivity, he must have attained the great age of eighty-six or eighty-eight at the time of this vision.

But we return to ver. 17. Here we read that “God gave” these four youths “knowledge, and skill in all learning, and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”

Here are four benefits which the Lord bestowed on these upright young Israelites, as a recompense for their fidelity. 1st, *Knowledge*; 2nd, *Skill* in all learning;—3rdly, *Wisdom*, in the conduct of themselves;—and 4thly, at least in the case of Daniel, something supernatural; prophetic gifts, a miraculous knowledge of the secrets of the Lord.

No doubt, as we have already said, these young men, to acquire knowledge, applied themselves with diligence to their studies; they rose early in the morning, they were sober, they were teachable, they loved their masters, they rendered themselves beloved. These were effectual means of doing well, and becoming distinguished. But they did not stop here; they knew that after all, it is God that giveth knowledge, and that without Him, “in vain we rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow.” They

prayed for the blessing of God on their labours; they began, continued, and ended each day with fervent supplications.

You will see, as we proceed in our narrative, that such, in fact, were the habits of these young students. Turn to the 23rd ver. of the 2nd chapter, and you will see the proof of this: “I thank thee and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers! who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now *what we desired of thee*; for thou hast made known unto us the king’s matter.” Yes, my dear children, and if you also would acquire knowledge in your respective callings, we say to you, be diligent, docile, ready to learn; be conscientious in your application, but above all, be instant in prayer, and entreat the Lord daily to give you his indispensable assistance. You see what knowledge he conferred on the young king Solomon, who asked him, first, and above all things, for wisdom. Read 1 Kings iv. 29—34. Read also what that great king says in Eccl. ii. 26. And when I speak thus, think not that I address myself exclusively to those among you who are called to study Greek, and Latin, and History, &c. No, I address myself equally to those who may be going through a painful and laborious apprenticeship, or learning some difficult trade.—Here, too, God only can give skill and success: this, too, is from Him. Read what the Lord said

of “Bezaleel,” the jeweller, of the tribe of Judah, and of Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan. Exod. xxxi. 1—6.

But it may be said, that some children never make much progress, notwithstanding all their application ; they have little talent, or quickness, or strength, or memory. Oh ! dear children, these things also God can and will give to those who ask them of him. Mark, in the second place, what is told us in ver. 17.

“God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom.”

Who giveth talent ? Who giveth understanding, or memory, or attention ? You are told here, and you already know, that it is God.

Well, then, be not discouraged. I could tell you many examples of God’s faithfulness in this respect, which I have known myself. You must take care, indeed, not to ask for talent, or application, or sagacity, that you may shine in society, rise above others, advance yourselves in the world, or gratify an earthly ambition. No, doubtless, to ask such success, in such a spirit, would be to pray to offend him. But if when you ask such things from Him, you are sure that it is with a view to His glory, and with a desire to serve and obey Him, then be persuaded that whatever you have need of he will give you.

I knew an old peasant, in my former pa-

rish, who being converted at the age of fifty, and having never learned to read, was exceedingly anxious to acquire this knowledge. But if he had this desire, it was not to shine in the world, nor to gain a little money ; it was to study the word of God for himself, and to become acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ. But at the age of fifty, it is very difficult to learn to read, especially when one has no master. What, then, did this worthy brother do ? He put into his hat the hymns of Mr. Malan, several of which he had learned by heart, and while he worked at his vine, he sat down from time to time, with his mattock by his side, and taking out his book, followed with his eye, line by line, and letter by letter, the verses which he repeated, and thus learned to read perfectly, and in a short time acquired the happiest knowledge of the New Testament. During my visit to the churches of the Saone and Loire, I heard of an old woman of Burgundy, who made a similar experiment. And Mr. Blumhardt, the late principal of the Missionary College at Basle, has told me that he often wondered at the quickness with which those young pupils who were influenced by the pure love of Christ, acquired a knowledge of the sacred scriptures.

But some one may say, Do we not often see young persons without piety, acquiring

with great ease the things which they are taught?

Yes, certainly ; because God, who “sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust, and maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good,” is often pleased to pour down upon such young persons the abundance of his favours, to draw them to himself, or if they will not give him their hearts, to leave them without excuse. But yet it is not the less certain that all knowledge, all learning, all talent, however vast and however brilliant, is nothing but dross, and the most wretched poverty, if the heart be devoid of prayer, the mind alienated from its Creator, the conscience burdened with dead works, and the life without God.

Hence we are told that God gave these four youths not only the two first gifts, but also—

3. In the third place, *wisdom*. But what is wisdom? True wisdom is that which cometh from above. “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding,” Job xxviii. 28. True wisdom is to know God, to love him, and to desire to be like him. Read the description which St. James gives of the wisdom which cometh from above. James iii. 17. And also how we are to obtain it. James i. 5—7.

It is thus we obtain that wisdom : by ask-

ing it of God, asking it every day, earnestly desiring it, and believing that God gives it for the love of his Son, Jesus Christ. See also the happiness of those who find that wisdom. Prov. iii. 13—18.

Such, my friends, were the blessings which the Lord bestowed on these four young Israelites, in recompense of their fidelity. But in the case of Daniel, who was the guide and the model of the others, and who had exercised upon them such a salutary influence, there was something more. The Lord gave him not only knowledge, skill, and wisdom, but also a spirit of prophecy: he gave him *visions* and *dreams*, and enabled him, like Joseph, in former times, to understand and interpret them.

You will better comprehend what is here said, if you refer to the words which the Lord addressed to Aaron and Miriam when they had rebelled against their brother Moses. Read Numb. xii. 6—8. From these words it appears that there were two ways in which the Lord revealed himself in those days to his prophets. He sent them *visions*, that is, being *awake*, they saw invisible objects which God caused to pass before them, as if they had really beheld them with their bodily eyes; or he sent them dreams, that is, *in their sleep* they had manifestations so clear and striking, they saw and heard things so distinctly, and so full of truth and reality, that it was im-

possible for them to confound them with ordinary dreams.

Such was the case with Daniel, as we shall see in the next chapter; for not only had he *visions* and *dreams* himself, and was enabled to understand their prophetic meaning, but he was given to reveal the dreams of others, and to tell their real interpretation.

But now we pass on to a very important moment in the career of these four young friends. We have arrived at the end of their third year of *trial* and of study, when the good Captain Melzar was to bring them into the presence of king Nebuchadnezzar.

What a solemn moment! what a thrilling scene for these four young Hebrews! To appear for final examination before that illustrious prince! but doubtless their hearts were full of peace; for while they prepared to appear in the presence of that dread monarch, they were impressed with the thought of a greater and more dreadful monarch than Nebuchadnezzar himself, even the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who reigneth in heaven and earth.

Never, perhaps, had there ruled over the nations of the earth, a greater or more illustrious monarch than Nebuchadnezzar. Though still in the flower of his age, he had already performed the most magnificent exploits, and was decidedly one of the most distinguished men of antiquity. A great

commander, a mighty conqueror, he displayed an extraordinary magnanimity, and the most heroic disposition. He was, so to speak, a Napoleon and an Alexander united in one person.

During the three years which Daniel and his companions had spent in study, Nebuchadnezzar, though very young, had performed prodigious labours, and effected immense conquests. When he took Jerusalem, and carried away the young Daniel, in the year 606, b. c., his father was still alive. He had subsequently conquered the powerful king of Egypt, and made himself master of all that prince's possessions in Syria ; the year following, having heard of his father's death, he returned to Babylon with vast treasures, intending to make it the most sumptuous city in the world. He afterwards formed an alliance with the king of the Medes, whose daughter he had married, and joined with him to besiege the city of Nineveh, a city so immense, that it took three days to go round it; he had taken and destroyed it; had overthrown the ancient and powerful empire of the Assyrians ; and, finally, had entered Babylon, laden with the spoils of the world.

It was now that the good Melzar brought into his presence the young Israelites. How must they have been gratified with the reception which they met with from Nebuchadnezzar ! We read, verses 19, 20, that

“the king communed with them,” and among all the youths which stood before him, “was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.” The king himself examined them, as well in learned questions, as in the languages and affairs of government; for he was a man of science and learning, and wished to see every thing with his own eyes. “And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king required of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.”

We are not informed how long the three friends of Daniel continued at court; but we are told of Daniel, that he remained there “even unto the first year of king Cyrus,” seventy years after; so that he had time to see, before his death, the deliverance of Jerusalem.

FOURTH LESSON.

DANIEL ii. 1—24.

MY dear children, we are now going to enter upon some of the most remarkable predictions of scripture ; we are going to see the God of heaven disclosing to the prophetic eye of his servant Daniel, the line of events which were to shake the kingdoms of the earth, 1000, 2000 and even 3000 years after him ; and which, in the present day, are accomplishing before our eyes, in the history of nations.

The Almighty evidently had two objects, in affording these important revelations to Daniel, and through him to his whole church.

1. He designed to put honour upon his servant Daniel, from his tenderest years ; because, he intended, not only to make him a guide, a light, and a consolation to his people Israel, in their bondage in Babylon ; but also, to employ him as an instrument of benediction and conversion to many of his elect among the heathen in those remote ages.

2. He designed, by means of the clearness and minute accuracy of Daniel's prophecies, to add another seal of divinity to the sacred

scriptures ; so that men of after ages, when they read these astonishing predictions, should be constrained to exclaim, Surely these pages are inspired ! this book must be from God ! for we see in it his inimitable signature and seal, since it contains the history of nations, ten, twenty, and even thirty centuries before the events occurred.

And for this purpose, what did he do ? He revealed to young Daniel, as he had done to Joseph, the secrets of a king, and the secrets of the future.

One night, while Daniel was sleeping quietly in his bed, and while the great king Nebuchadnezzar, who had lately returned to his capital, after the most splendid conquests, was reposing in magnificence on his royal couch, the Lord interrupted the slumbers of the monarch by a dream, such as he had never seen before ; a frightful dream—a dream terrible to behold—a dream so striking and so supernatural, that an indescribable emotion agitated his whole being ; and in the morning, though he was unable to recall what he had seen, yet he could not shake off the conviction that great things had been revealed to him—that this dream had nothing in common with the ordinary fantastic visions of the night, but had come from God. “ It is a revelation from heaven,” thought he ; therefore, he determines to ascertain it at any cost ; to discover its nature and its import ; he has no rest—he

is miserable—he is troubled and filled with terror.

You have already seen, that in his perplexity and distress, he sent for “the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans;” (for heathen kings in ancient, as in modern times, have always been accustomed to collect about them persons who practised these execrable arts,) but here, observe his unreasonable demand ; he requires of them, not only to tell him the *meaning* of what he has seen, but *what* it was that he saw.

In vain do the magicians twice answer him : “Thou demandest, O king, a thing impossible ! There is no king, lord, nor ruler, that ever asked such things from any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean ; there is none other that can show it except the gods, whose dwelling is not in flesh.” He is deaf to all expostulation, and, in the excess of his rage, exclaims, “Wretches ! the decree is gone out against you ; ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses turned into a dunghill.” It was after this, that Daniel, who was included in the same condemnation as the rest, was introduced ; and in his conduct in this matter, there are three things highly deserving of your most serious attention, which I would invite you to consider.

1. Observe, that he displayed, on this trying occasion, an immutable *faith* in the assistance of his God.

2. That he sought, by *fervent prayer*, that assistance in which he trusted.

3. That having obtained it, he acknowledged it with grateful *praises* and *thanksgivings* to the Lord.

But here it may be well to call to mind once more the age of this young and noble prophet, at the time when these new scenes took place. Can you tell me how old he was, at most, when he was carried a captive into Babylon?

Fifteen.

Now, you remember I told you that Nebuchadnezzar lost his father the year after Daniel was taken captive. Hence it was, then, that he began to reign alone ; and we are informed that it was “in the *second* year of his reign” that he had the divine vision in question. In Jeremiah we read, that “the fourth year of Jehoiakim that is the year after the taking of Jerusalem, was the first of Nebuchadnezzar ;” because, that young prince had been associated with his father, in the empire, two years before his death. Daniel, therefore, could not, at this time, have been more than seventeen or eighteen years of age ; but the Lord had already endowed his mind and his heart with an admirable wisdom, because he had been faithful in the use of his first gifts.

Endeavour, then, to bear in mind that Daniel was made prisoner in the year 606,

B. C.; that Nebuchadnezzar began to reign in the year 605; and that he had his dream the following year, 604 B. C.

But let us proceed with the explanation of our verses. The sanguinary sentence of the king is published in Babylon; the unhappy magicians and astrologers are doomed to die, and Daniel and his companions are every where sought for, to be subjected to the same fate, because they cannot do what is impossible. Thus, all are condemned, without exception, and the innocent Daniel is confounded with these wicked impostors! What ferocious cruelty! what extravagant and diabolical tyranny, in a king who, otherwise, was not devoid of great and generous sentiments, and had, more than once, displayed so noble a character! But, alas! such is the corrupt and feeble heart of man, when it enjoys too much prosperity and power.—Nebuchadnezzar had need to be humbled.

Here observe how miserable it is to live under a despotic government, when the lives of all **are at** the mercy of one man; when a momentary burst of passion in a young tyrant may cause the death of prophets—the massacre of God's children—sweep whole families to the grave—and plunge a nation in the agonies of grief. What gratitude do you owe to God, that you have been born in a land of liberty, where justice reigns, and the rights of all are respected? Yes, my friends,

it is a frightful calamity, when a nation groans under the iron yoke of a wicked king; but it is a still greater calamity when it trembles under the scourge of a revolutionary government, which sets up a thousand tyrants instead of one, and converts a whole people into a ferocious executioner, armed with a thousand animosities, and thirsting for blood. Ask your father, or your grandfathers, and they will tell you that it was so, throughout Europe, not more than forty years since. Human blood then flowed like water; life was more bitter than death, and you might have seen guillotines standing night and day, in every town in France. Whole families were beheaded, especially when they were rich, from the hoary-headed grandfather, to children of tender age. And almost the same atrocities were committed on our own bastions at Geneva. Well, then, dear children! who can assure you, that were a similar revolution once more to break out in France, the same horrors would not be repeated in our city, before our eyes?

The heart of the natural man is unchanged. The gospel alone can regenerate it, and that gospel has not made any considerable progress in France, or even in Switzerland. You have, perhaps, read the "Loss of the Kent;" while the tempest was raging around the vessel, the fire broke out, and all on board expected every instant to be blown up into

the air; but at that awful moment, those who were true Christians commended their souls into the hands of their God. Now, we, too, are on board a vessel, which, at any moment, may explode into the air. What, then, ought we to do? We ought to pray to God to stretch over us his protecting hand; but, above all, if such a calamity should come upon our country again, to give us his grace, that we may be found like Daniel, full of wisdom, faith, and prayer.

But I must not omit to observe, that however cruel was the sentence of the king of Babylon against the astrologers, their chastisement from God was not the less merited. These unhappy men exercised a hateful and diabolical trade; they were seducers and poisoners, as the Bible calls them. False prophets are an abomination to the Lord. Read what God has said to his people: Deut. xviii. 10, 14. And see the punishment which was to be inflicted upon such persons. Lev. xx. 27.

These astrologers and diviners of Babylon, however, on hearing of the terrible decree which had gone out against them, fled in every direction, and hid themselves wherever they could, in order to escape the impending storm; but the terrible Arioch, the captain of the guard, sent soldiers throughout the country to take them and put them to death. Daniel, likewise, was

sought for, though he was a stranger, and an amiable young man, and though the king had found ten times more wisdom in him than in all the astrologers of his kingdom, chap. i. 20. But the king of Babylon, hurried on by his passions, listened only to his blind rage ; and while he admired the premature wisdom which he discovered in the young Israelite, he never imagined that a mere youth, of such a tender age, could throw more light upon his dreams than all the sages of his empire.

Now pause, and contemplate Daniel.—Admire first his faith ; and because of his faith, his firmness ; and at the same time, his meekness, his serenity, his pious wisdom.

He does not fly—he does not hide himself—No, he has put his confidence in God his Saviour, and he determines to present himself before the dreadful Arioch, who has gone forth to put to death all the sages of Babylon, and is seeking him also, to subject him to the same fate.

Now, it is said (ver. 14) that Daniel turned aside the counsel and decree of the king by his “ admirable wisdom.”* But the passage may be translated as it is, for example, in the English version, “ Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch.”—Which ever of these translations be preferred, it is

* See French Version.

obvious that the meaning is, that by the wisdom and firmness with which God had endowed him, and by the imposing dignity which already marked his countenance, Daniel arrested the fury of the dreaded Arioach. And it would seem that for this he required to act with great prudence and strength of mind; for, in his thanksgiving, we find him saying to God; “I thank thee, O God of my fathers! who hast given me wisdom and might,” ver. 23.

But how deeply interesting is this moment in the career of Daniel! I imagine I see before me the noble youth, whom a cruel and unjust decree had marked out for destruction. He enters into the presence of Arioach; he addresses him with the calmness of conscious integrity, and, at the same time, with dignity, as a prophet of the Lord: “Why is the decree so hasty from the king?” Arioach explains the whole affair to Daniel, who is in total ignorance of it, for he had no connexion with the astrologers and pretended sages of the king; he gave himself up entirely to his studies and devotions, with his companions, and had as yet heard nothing of that alarming dream which had so deeply affected the mind of Nebuchadnezzar.

But mark the conduct of this young believer. His part is immediately taken; he makes no complaints, no reproaches; he feels no perplexity! he merely says, I will go to

the king ! And why ? he looks higher than the king ; he has put his confidence in God. He determines to say nothing of his project to his three young companions for the present, but to present himself at once before the monarch ; and, " building himself up on his most holy faith," to tell him : " Sire, give me time, and I will show thee the dream and the interpretation thereof." Such is his confidence ; he is assured that the Lord will hear him, and not abandon his servant who puts his trust in him, and desires to glorify him.

But further, notice the second thing in the conduct of Daniel, which I have specified. Why does he demand time ? Is it to prolong his life ? Is it at least to ask counsel of men ? Oh, no ! it is to pray, to pray earnestly, to pray with his brethren. In this is his wisdom, in this his strength. He confides in God for deliverance, but he does so in the exercise of prayer. Confidence without prayer is false and delusive : prayer without confidence is also delusive and false. He says to himself, in effect, what Paul does to the Philippians, " Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." —chap. iv. 6.

The king of Babylon, remembering the extraordinary wisdom of Daniel, and repenting, perhaps, of his former precipitation, grants the delay. The young prophet, as we read ver. 17, immediately returns to his house, and now determines "to make the thing known" to his friends. And wherefore? "That," as we are told, ver. 18, "they might desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret, that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

O what a noble and affecting sight, to behold these four young men on their knees, in their chamber in Babylon, before the God of their fathers, imploring his mercy! Behold them praying with one heart to their heavenly Father; reading together the promises of his word; committing themselves to the Lord of all, for life or for death; encouraging, animating, strengthening one another as brethren! Ah! I fear not to say, that in those days of affliction they were happy. This is happiness, true happiness; to have God with us, God for us, God in us! Yea, this is happiness indeed!

And, my dear children, this is what you also need. Oh, yes! you need such joys, such friends—friends like those of Daniel; praying friends—friends for eternity as well as for time. You need friends to whom you can go in the hour of trial and affliction, and

say, “Pray with me ! let us ask mercies of the God of heaven concerning this matter.” Ah ! these are true friends ! in their society we become better ; with them we feel that there is a union which shall last in heaven ; of which it may be said, It is for ever ! O ! the real, the precious friends are those of whom there will be reason to say to God in the last day, My God, I praise, I bless thee for them !

Now, hear what their prayer was. They desired *mercies* of God, ver. 18 ; and, as Daniel afterwards said, in the touching effusion of his heart, “O, my God, we do not present ourselves before thee for our own righteousness, but for thy great mercies ;” these dear youths, pious as they were, came to God as humble sinners, *imploring mercy*. Thus they prayed ; beseeching God to grant them, according to the faith of Daniel, the knowledge of the supernatural vision which he had given to the king a few nights before.

But observe here an important feature in the prayer of Daniel, which deserves to be particularly attended to. Daniel had faith to believe that God would reveal to him the vision of the king ; but did he remain with his arms folded, waiting for its accomplishment ? No, he prayed, he prayed without ceasing, until he was heard. And thus will the true believer do. He will believe, but he will also pray ; and he will pray until the Lord has heard his supplications.

But hear now how the faith of these young Hebrews was honoured. Their expectation was not disappointed ; their prayers were not without effect. In the dead of night, while Daniel lay awake, (for it was not a dream, it was a vision,) he suddenly beheld passing before him, with all the richness of reality, the terrible apparition which the king of Babylon had seen in his sleep. It was the image of a man of shining metal ; it resembled a gigantic statue, and its brightness was overpowering ; the form thereof was appalling, and, the scripture tells us, terrible. The head was of gold, the breast of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs and feet of iron. Presently it was overthrown by a frightful collision, broken in pieces, and reduced to powder. Then, though we are not informed how, the meaning also was revealed to the prophet. This interpretation will occupy our attention in subsequent meditations ; for the present we must pass on to the 19th verse, which contains the third and last thing I shall notice in the conduct of Daniel.

“The secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”

You have already seen the faith of this young prophet, and heard his prayers ; now hear his praises. He is as ready to give thanks as to ask. How earnest, how full of love is his soul in its expressions of gratitude

and of joy ! He does not wait until the morning ; no, immediately, in the middle of the night, he rises to bless the God of heaven. He does not wait till he has seen the king of Babylon, and learned from his lips the identity of his vision ; no—God of my prayers, cries he, I praise thee, I magnify thee, I glorify thee ; “ let all that is within me bless thy holy name !”

Let us learn a lesson from this. We all, perhaps, know how to pray when we are in affliction, or some difficulty ; but too often, when the Lord comes to our help, the deliverance seems to us quite natural, and we know not how to give thanks.

But, my friends, time admonishes us ; we must separate. One more reflection would I leave with you, and I entreat you to think of it during the day, when the remembrance of Daniel and his fervent prayers comes into your mind. You have seen in our last five verses, the lively gratitude which he felt when the revelation of the secret was given to him in a vision of the night. But, oh ! what ought to be our gratitude for the revelation of the mystery of Jesus Christ, which is vouchsafed to us ; that mystery which St. Paul says “ was not made known unto the sons of men ;” Ephes. iii. 5. “ That mystery, the knowledge of which is life eternal ! ” O ! “ thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift ! ”

2 Cor. 4—15.

FIFTH LESSON.

DANIEL xi. 25, 26.

LAST Sunday we were engaged in contemplating a sight equally touching and instructive. Daniel had not feared to go before the king, and to say to him : “ Give me time, and I will not only make known to thee the dream, now forgotten, which so exceedingly troubled thy sleep, but I will give thee also the mysterious interpretation thereof.” From thence the young prophet, having returned to his abode, called together his companions in bondage, and joining with them in humble supplication to the God of their fathers, prayed with such fervency and success, that the following night the appalling dream of the king of Babylon was revealed to him in a supernatural vision, and he was enabled to read with a prophetic eye, the great events of the future. It was here we left off in our last lesson.

We have now once more to follow this pious youth into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar ; and we shall confine ourselves, on the present occasion, to the consideration of the first part of the revelation which he received. I say the first part, because, you

remember, the king required two things ; his *thoughts*, and the *meaning* of his thoughts.

But I hope, dear children, you have not neglected the twofold task which I enjoined on you. You recollect what it was ? I told you to study the map and the table of years which I gave you. In other words, the geography and chronology of the events ; their geography, that is the respective situation of the countries in which they took place ; and their chronology, or the number of years which elapsed between each of them.

Now, to facilitate such calculations, we usually take the birth of our Lord as the period from which we date. We say, for example, that such an event happened fifty or 100 years before or after Jesus Christ. Daniel interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in the year 605 before Christ, and we are now in the year 1837 after Christ. Hence it is 2442 years since Daniel entered the magnificent palace of Babylon, to explain to the king the thoughts of his heart.

To render this subject more easy to you, I have prepared two chronological tables. The first consists of a short list of the principal dates in history, from the creation to our day ; the second contains an enumeration of the principal events of the age of Daniel.

My first table is merely an enlargement of that which I gave you a few weeks ago. It reaches from Adam to Jesus Christ, and

from Jesus Christ to Bonaparte. It will serve the same purpose in chronology as a map of the world in geography. To assist the memory, I have set down the dates only in round numbers and centuries, that is, from 100 years to 100 years before Christ, and from 100 years to 100 years after Christ.

My second, as I have said, is a development of the age of Daniel. It is not necessary for you to learn this by heart, but I wish you to have it frequently under your eye, while you are reading the book of Daniel; and you may make a very profitable use of it hereafter in studying Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the books of Kings and Chronicles.

It is a solemn and imperative duty on all Christians to make themselves acquainted with the Old Testament, and more especially with the prophetical books, which form such a large portion of it. The ignorance which prevails among Christians in the present day, in this respect, is really very much to be reprobated. It is a great evil, and ought to cease. There are many causes which contribute to it; I shall mention a few of them.

And, first, one cause of this ignorance of the prophecies is, simply, that they are not read. I have met many pious persons, here and elsewhere, who seemed to think that having made out three or four orthodox doctrines from the scriptures, they had nothing more to do than to study the New Testament,

and to become acquainted with Christ as their Saviour from it. After all, say they, what need have I to become learned in the Old Testament? I am no theologian. But, O my God ! pardon such thoughts, for they know not what they do ! they know not how guilty is their conduct ! What ! has God spoken for nought ? He hath declared, that "all scripture" (the whole Old Testament, for at that time the New Testament was not written) "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—2 Tim. iii.

16. Our Lord hath said : "Search the scriptures," (of the Old Testament,) "for they are they that testify of me," John v. 39..... And they dare to neglect such a book ! neglect to study those scriptures in which are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! No wonder if such Christians make little progress in the divine life, and if they fail for lack of nourishment—" My people perish for lack of knowledge, saith the Lord."

A second cause of this evil is, that even those who do read the prophecies, take little pains to understand them. They open the sacred volume without regularity, and without close study, just when they happen to feel so disposed, and they seek out of it nothing more than a vague, and indolent, and fortuitous edification. They read in it here and there, to make a spiritual application of its

contents, without regard to the real and literal meaning which its divine author intended it to convey. They are more desirous to bind it into a fanciful conformity with their own thoughts at the moment, than to find out what God himself has engraven upon its pages. Surely, there is no reverence in this mode of reading the Bible. How, then, I would ask, can they expect a blessing on it?

But a third cause of the ignorance of the prophetical scriptures, which so lamentably prevails among Christians of the present day, even among those who read the prophecies, is that they do not sufficiently study the contemporary history. This is absolutely necessary, and nothing is more easy. Let any one take this slight trouble, and he will be surprised at the innumerable instances in which the historical will throw light upon the prophetical books of the Bible. When I decided on giving you these lectures on the book of Daniel, I began to study the contemporary histories of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Jeremiah, in the sacred volume, and to compare, in a somewhat detailed manner, their predictions with the events ; and I cannot tell you the light I received, and the enjoyment I experienced, from this comparison. It is, then, to exercise you the better in connecting the study of the events with that of the prophecies,

that I have prepared for you these two chronological tables.*

I shall now mention, by way of example, some of the events which it is necessary for you to know thoroughly, in order to understand the history and prophecies of Daniel.

You must remember that there are *three kings* of whom the scriptures frequently speak; and *three prophets*, who are among the holiest and most illustrious of the Old Testament.

These three kings are, Pharaoh-Necho, in Egypt; Jehoiakim, in Jerusalem; and Nebuchadnezzar, in Babylon. See Map.

Now, remark the places of the three prophets. In Jerusalem, (and afterwards in Egypt,) Jeremiah; in Babylon, (and later at Susa, in Persia,) Daniel; in Babylon, by the River Chebar, Ezekiel. Let us first speak of the three kings.

Pharaoh had marched out of Egypt at the head of a powerful army, and made considerable conquests as far as the river Euphrates, when he took the city of Carchemish. At that time the young and good king Josiah, the father of Jehoiakim, reigned in Judea. This prince, in a moment of imprudence, was induced to march against the king of Egypt; but in the midst of the battle he re-

* They are to be found at the end of the volume.

ceived an arrow in his breast, and he said to his servants, “Have me away, for I am sore wounded.” He was carried away from the field in his chariot, and soon after died ; and when his dead body was conveyed to Jerusalem, there was great mourning for him in all the country.

Pharaoh having heard that Josiah had fallen in the battle, hastened to Jerusalem, and carried away captive into Egypt the young Jehoahaz, whom the people had raised to the throne of his pious father. Jehoiakim, whom the king of Egypt put in his place, reigned as his tributary, and, to please him, loaded his people with burdensome taxes. Meanwhile, these misfortunes had not yet reached their end, for all Israel had forgotten God.

It was soon Nebuchadnezzar’s turn to chastise this ungrateful people. This prince, an Assyrian by race, was still a very young man, and was distinguished in the field ; his father was yet living, but he reigned conjointly with him over Babylon and Chaldea. He marches against Pharaoh, obtains victory after victory, drives him back into Egypt, and proceeds to lay siege to Jerusalem. Jehoiakim surrenders, and becomes his tributary, as he had been to the king of Egypt for three years. It was at this time that Nebuchadnezzar carried away Daniel into captivity. Soon he hastens to new conquests :

but hearing of his father's death, he returns to his capital, laden with immense riches, and builds the most magnificent palaces. But God, who had purposed to convert him on the throne of Babylon, and to make him the means of calling many souls among the Gentiles to the knowledge of the truth, suffers him not to waste his time in the pursuit of such trifles. While he is thinking, on his royal couch, of future conquests, he is visited by a supernatural dream, which fills his whole soul with terror. He sees before him the colossal form of a man, as it were, alive. Its aspect is terrible, and its brightness wonderful. Its head was of gold, its breast of silver, its thighs of brass, and its legs of iron. But suddenly a little stone cut out of the mountain rolls down and smites the toes of this mighty image; and immediately the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron are reduced to dust, and the whole is destroyed. And, behold! this little stone becomes a great mountain, and this mountain fills the whole earth!

Such are the three kings: let us now speak of the three prophets.

But first, it is necessary to remind you that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem three times during the life of Daniel. He took it the first time, when, after conquering the king of Egypt, he reduced Jehoiakim, and carried away Daniel into Chaldea. This was

in the year 606, b. c. He took it a second time, six years after, to punish Jehoiachin, who had revolted against him, and made a new treaty with the king of Egypt. On this occasion it was that he removed the young king, Jehoiachin, who had succeeded his father, Jehoiakim, three months before, to Babylon, loaded with a double chain of brass ; and placed on his throne in his stead, his uncle, Zedekiah, the brother of Jehoiakim, and third son of the good king Josiah. It was after this second siege that the prophet Ezekiel was carried away captive to the river Chebar, in Chaldea.

Lastly, he took it a third time, nineteen years later, when Zedekiah revolted against him. It was then he slew the children of this prince in his presence, put out his eyes, and sent him in chains to prison, in Babylon, burned the temple of Jerusalem, and razed the city to the ground.

Let us now say a few words about the three prophets.

There were others, it is true, at Jerusalem during these disastrous times, as Habakkuk, Obadiah, Baruch, and Zephaniah ; but Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah were the holiest and most distinguished ; they were acquainted with each other ; they read one another's writings, but they were called to live at a great distance from each other, and to spend very different kinds of lives.

Jeremiah was about forty-five years of age at the time, Daniel seventeen, and Ezekiel twenty.

Jeremiah prophesied at Jerusalem, Daniel at Babylon, Ezekiel by the river Chebar.

Jeremiah prophesied in tears, and amid persecution, in poverty and in prison, clothed in goat-skins, and living among the poor. Daniel prophesied in power and splendour, in the palaces of kings, and clothed like the nobles of the empire; for he was himself one of the princes of Babylon. But he was holy, and lived with God; he was sober, humble, meek, a man of prayer among the great; he ate only pulse, and drank only water, and was dear to the Lord as Noah, Moses, and Job. Ezekiel, on the contrary, prophesied by the river Chebar, in the centre of Chaldea, amid the sorrows and the humiliations of exile. At the time of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, both he and Jeremiah were still in Jerusalem; but seven years after, he, in his turn, was led into captivity, while Jeremiah continued until his death among the ungodly Jews, in the huts of Judea. It is even said, that when they went down to Egypt they brought him with them, and put him to death there; and we are told that the Jews of Chaldea, also, at a later period, being provoked by the prophecies of Ezekiel, dragged him upon the stones until

his skull was fractured, and his brains fell out on the ground.

Finally, I would remind you, that the same year, that is, the year preceding the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah predicted to the Jews that the above-named prince would come again to Jerusalem, besiege, and take it, and that he would carry them away as prisoners, and that this captivity should last for seventy years. Daniel knew of this prophecy; he heard of it from the Jews who were brought into Chaldea, after Nebuchadnezzar's second expedition; and you will see, when you come to the ninth chapter, with what devotion he applied himself to the study of the writings of his brother, Jeremiah.

But let us return to the explanation of the verses before us. We read in the 25th verse, that Arioch “went in to the king, in haste,” to tell him that he had at length found a person who could make known to him his dream. But observe the courtier-like manner in which he expresses himself. Would not one think that he had taken vast pains to find an interpreter, and that the promises of Daniel were entirely owing to his diligent researches?—and yet you have seen that all the trouble he took was to discover that innocent youth, to put him to death. “I have found a man,” said he, “of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto

the king the interpretation.” The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, “art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?”

We think we can trace in these words of the king, something like a mingled feeling of astonishment and distrust, on seeing this youth of seventeen come forward to explain that which had baffled the wisdom of all the wise men of Chaldea. But thus, at all times, the Lord is pleased to choose the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. And even now, when he pours out his Spirit upon a child, he gives him a deeper knowledge of the holy scriptures, and puts into his young heart, more wisdom, even in the eyes of men, than is possessed by hoary-headed sages, who have only the wisdom of this world, and are unacquainted with the word of God.

Hear, now, the young prophet’s answer to the king. And Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, “the secret which the king hath demanded, cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the sooth-sayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven, that revealeth secrets, and maketh known unto the king Nebuchadnez zar, what shall be in the latter days. But as for me, the secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known

the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest make known the thoughts of thy heart," ver. 27—30.

How beautiful! how sublime! Let us notice a few of the most important features of this noble answer.

1. The prophet declares the impossibility of any of the children of men doing what the king required. Why doth the king demand a thing that is impossible? Why put such confidence in diviners? Why deliver them up so cruelly to death? It is as if he had said: O king, despise them; no longer consult them; but do not destroy them! And as for the two things which thou demandest —the dream and its interpretation, oh! expect them not from any of the sons of men; and if I come to reveal them to thee, know that I have not discovered them of myself.

2. He declares, that what is impossible with man, is possible with God; and remember, that he is addressing a heathen king, who worshipped a multitude of false gods, and caused himself to be adored as a divinity. With what care does he seek to lead him to the knowledge of his God; how calmly and how boldly does he give all the glory to his Master! "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he it is that maketh known unto the king the revolutions of empires, and the great things which shall be in the latter days. Well mayest thou inquire

into them, O king, for they are no vain dreams —they are great things.”

3. Mark his modesty,—he had said the thing was impossible to men ; he had further said, it was possible to God. Now, he adds, that he will do it : but how ! Ah ! it is not “for any wisdom that he has more than any living.” No ; the secret has been revealed to him, that the king of Babylon may know the thoughts of his heart, and give glory to the God of heaven.

And such, my friends, is the view which we must take of the gospel of Jesus Christ. 1. It contains things which it is impossible for the natural man to know. 2. It is God that reveals these things. 3. He reveals them, not “for any wisdom that we have, more than any living, but because of his great mercy, to the praise of the glory of his grace.”

SIXTH LESSON.

DANIEL xi. 36—46.

THE proud king of Babylon had risen from his royal couch in agitation and alarm. An indescribable dream had chilled him with horror ; and yet he had forgotten all its details ; all he remembered was its terrible majesty. Never had anything like it, in the mysteries of sleep, troubled his repose ; it was evidently an affair between heaven and himself.

But what was the meaning of it ? And how was he to ascertain this, since he no longer remembered even what he had seen of it ? He anxiously desires to know two things : the *dream* and *its interpretation*.

The prophet Daniel, however, still a youth, presents himself before him to tell him these things. “ There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets,” and this has been revealed to him, “ not for any wisdom which he has, more than any living,” but that he may give unto the king a solemn interpretation of it. The dream was this :

The king had seen in the night a majestic personage suddenly appear before him. “ His form,” says Daniel, “ was terrible,” either from its dazzling brightness, or from its attitude and

the height of its stature, or from the menacing expression of its looks ; but what was most alarming in this midnight vision, was its termination. While the king beheld this personage, a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, rolling down, smote the feet of this gigantic image ; and behold ! it suddenly fell, and was reduced to a fine powder, like the chaff which is winnowed in a day of summer, and the wind scattereth it away. But what was the result ? That stone grew, it became a great mountain, and in a little time it filled the whole earth !

“ This is the dream,” says Daniel, “ and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.”

This interpretation you have already repeated to me, my dear children—I will read it over again for you, that you may be able to give more attention to my explanations.—See verses 37—46.

Can you conceive a scene more imposing or more affecting than that described in these verses ? Behold the great Nebuchadnezzar listening to this young man, while he discloses to him the secrets of his thoughts, and the mysteries of the future : all the dreadful images of his dream which he had forgotten, re-appear before him ; he sees them again, he recognises them ; he is troubled ; his heart beats violently ; he scarcely breathes ; he hangs upon the words of the prophet. Daniel

having revealed to him the hidden things of the past, now proceeds to tell him those of the future! He is then a messenger of heaven; the Spirit of God is with him!—Behold, then, upon his throne, this king so proud, this conqueror, who had filled the world with the terror of his name, this Bonaparte, this mighty conqueror, this demi-god adored by twenty nations in Asia! Behold, he rises before the young slave; he descends from his gilded canopy, throws himself at the feet of Daniel, falls on his face upon the ground, and kisses the dust!

And why this emotion, this respect, these adorations? It is not Daniel he adores, it is the message of the God of heaven. “Of a truth,” exclaims he, “your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of lords, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal such things.”

But, again, why these fervent adorations; why this full persuasion of the truth of Daniel’s interpretation? Ah! how could he doubt it? If Daniel could know the secrets of the past, why not also penetrate into the mysteries of the future? The king felt this while the young man revealed to him in succession the miraculous images of his dream; and therefore it was that he now experienced this emotion of soul, these transports of admiration.

Let us begin our explanations with verses

36 and 37.—36. “This is the dream, and we will tell the interpretation thereof.” 37. “Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and strength, and glory.”

To understand these and the following words, we must remember what is said, ver. 28, 29: “There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall be hereafter.” We learn from these words that this dream was intended to make known to Nebuchadnezzar “what should be hereafter,” and even “what should be in the latter times;” and from ver. 29 we learn that the king, who was a man of powerful mind, was meditating in his bed on the events which might agitate the world after him, when suddenly God made known to him what was to happen, that is, the succession of empires and of revolutions which were to decide, in turn, the destinies of the people of God. This is what I purpose explaining to you.

The greater part of you, I take for granted, have heard of the four great monarchies; the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman—and of their founders, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus the Great, Alexander

the Great, and Cæsar. Every child who has made any progress in history, knows something of these great empires, and of these illustrious persons. But even should you still be altogether ignorant of them, do not think that this is any reason for your giving less attention to the subject before us. The explanation of the book of Daniel, of itself, will make you acquainted with them; and the map, which I have already shown you, will facilitate your understanding them.

But here I wish to make two important general remarks on the prophecies which we are going to explain.

The first is, that in the history of nations there are always two classes of interest, and of facts very distinct, and yet exercising over each other a powerful influence. The first are political events; the second religious.—The former regard kings and emperors; the latter the souls of men and the church of God.—By whom shall Europe be ruled ten years hence? Whether by the French, the English, or the Russians? whether by kings and emperors, or revolutionists and republicans? These are events of politics—this is what we call the history of states. But what shall be the state of Christianity in Europe? whether the Spaniards, the Italians, the French, shall recognise the authority of the Pope or of the Bible, in matters of faith? whether they shall seek their peace in God

or in their priests? These are religious events; this is the history of the church. Hence, when an author undertakes to write a complete history of any people, he must speak of both these things, and then his book is called a history of the *church* and of the *state*!

You understand, then, what I mean when I say that in Daniel you will find two interests, two orders of events, two histories: the history of the church, and the history of the state. But while the Spirit of God follows at the same time these two lines of narration, he never confounds them. Thus, for example, he speaks of the four great monarchies in the second chapter, and again in the seventh and eighth chapters. But in the former case, it is the history of the state which he has principally in view, and he speaks of religion only the better to complete his political history. And hence, to whom does he address his revelation? To Nebuchadnezzar, to a king, and that a heathen king. But in the seventh and eighth chapters, it is the history of religion that he has principally in view, and he speaks of the history of the state only as supplementary to that of the church; and then to whom does he address himself? Not, you know, to a warrior, a conqueror, a heathen king, but to a man of God, to one of his prophets, his beloved Daniel.

This is my first remark ; and now for my second.

What political histories, think you, should we expect to find in Daniel ? Is it the history of all nations ? the Americans, the Chinese, the Scythians ? No, doubtless ; but the history of those nations only which have had to do with the people of God ; the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, then the ten Gothic nations, the Turks, the Russians, and Muscovites. Now, here is my map. It comprehends the whole of what is called the *prophetic earth*, that is, the world as known by the ancients, the countries which had connexion with the people of God, the four great monarchies. You see it is painted in three different colours ; the sea in blue, the prophetical countries in white, and all the countries beyond the limits of prophecy in red.

And now, my dear children, I am sure you understand why the Lord, when he sent a dream to the king of Babylon, caused him to forget it before morning. It was to afford Daniel an opportunity of making it known to him, and thus to give him an undeniable proof that the revelation of the meaning of the vision was not less certain and divine than the revelation of the vision itself. Daniel revealed to the king two mysteries at once ; that of the past and that of the future. On hearing of the mystery of the past, he

must have said, It is so ; I now remember it ! of a truth all this is from God ! How, then, could he doubt the mystery of the future ?

Therefore, it was, that when Daniel had finished speaking, the king arose and fell at his feet.

Now, my friends, we shall presently see that we also have equal, yea, stronger and more numerous reasons than Nebuchadnezzar, to cast ourselves in adoring wonder, not before Daniel, but before the God of Daniel, when we read the astonishing prophecies of this man of God.

In fact, to us, as well as to Nebuchadnezzar, these predictions present a double aspect; the first of which ought to lead us to adore the wisdom, power, and goodness of God; in the second, I shall point them out to you.

The words of Daniel, as we have said, had a double aspect to the king of Babylon—the one had reference to the past, the *dream* itself; the other looked altogether to the future, and had reference to events prefigured by the dream—events, which Daniel tells the king were to happen after him. There shall be yet three kingdoms after thee, that of the Medes and Persians, that of the Greeks, that of the Romans ; and after all these there shall arise a fifth, that of Jesus Christ, which shall fill the earth and never pass away.

Now this prediction, announced to the king of Babylon 2443 years ago, and which was

altogether future to him, is no longer so to us, at least not wholly. Relatively to us, it resolves itself into two parts, one of which was future to Nebuchadnezzar, but is already past to our generation ; the other was future to Nebuchadnezzar, and is likewise so to us in the present day.

We in this age can look back and see behind us the four great monarchies ; they have appeared each in its turn, and have ruled and oppressed in turn the people of God ; they have appeared with all the circumstances which the prophet of the Lord so minutely predicted more than 2000 years ago.

Hence, my dear children, we have reason for the very same feelings as Nebuchadnezzar. We have reason to adore the power, wisdom, and truth of God ; to acknowledge with reverence the divine inspiration of the Scriptures ; and to await with firm assurance, with submission and with prayer, that which is yet to come, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which shall cover the earth, break the nations with a rod of iron, and fill the hearts of God's people with joy and gladness, as certainly as the empires of the Persians, Greeks and Romans appeared in their appointed times on the earth. Therefore "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
1 Peter i. 13. "Be ye holy, for he is holy."

SEVENTH LESSON.

DANIEL ii. 37, 38.

O WHAT a wonderful book is this ! how miraculous ! how loudly does it speak to us when we peruse it with attention ! Son of man, it is the God of heaven speaks to thee in this book ; listen to him therefore reverentially ; for he now calls thee that thou mayest have life.

Last Sunday we saw Daniel revealing the future to the king of Babylon ; and without entering into any explanation of these astonishing prophecies, you were enabled to form some idea of their divine character. As the eagle hovering in the clouds, above the summits of our Alps, discerns from a distance the plains of Italy, towards which he wings his flight, with their rivers and lakes, forests and cities ; so Daniel, the man of God, in these sublime revelations, rising above time, and mounting up into the heights of faith, soars tranquilly over the future, and discovers in the distance the empires, kings, and events which were to agitate the world at successive periods ; and taking in with one glance of his prophetic eye the whole series of ages, from Nebuchadnezzar to the second coming

of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaks to us of those remote times, as another would relate the histories of the past.

Thus God predicts the future destinies of nations, because he is Sovereign in providence, as he is Sovereign in nature. He can foretel as infallibly the distant changes of empires as the revolutions of the heavenly bodies ; he knows as certainly what the commotions of the people and the thousand passions of kings will produce, as what the thousand attractions of the stars and their most distant courses will bring about in immensity.

I have lately been much struck by this thought, in reading over an article on astronomy, giving the details of an eclipse which is expected on the 20th of the present month. It is then, thought I, the same God who governs the stars and the nations of men ; he rules mankind, who dwell on earth, as well as the worlds which roll in infinite space ; he stays the commotions of the people as well as the billows of the sea ; he holds in his hand the hearts of kings, as he counts the hosts of heaven and calls them all by name. Hence it is that Daniel, when the Spirit of God is upon him, is able to predict the revolutions of empires, just as Sir Isaac Newton, when he held his telescope in one hand and his powerful pen in the other, was able to predict, centuries beforehand, the variations and revolutions of the remotest planets in

the region of space, where they travel at the rate of 1,500,000 miles a day.

Thursday next, the 20th of the month, at fourteen minutes after seven o'clock, P. M., the astronomers of Europe will be in their observatories, watching a total eclipse of the moon; for at that moment that planet will be seen to enter the earth's shadow, then soon after to grow dark, become like blood, and finally to undergo a total eclipse a few seconds after nine o'clock. The end of the wonderful phenomenon will be observable at Geneva four minutes after eleven at night.

Thus you see the eclipse which we expect on Thursday next has been predicted hundreds of years ago; and it might have been predicted two or three thousand years ago by the astronomers of Babylon. And yet you are aware that the moon travels more than 600 millions of miles in a year. It accompanies the earth in space with a velocity sixty times greater than that of a cannon ball, and ceases not night and day thus to travel at the rate of 1200 miles a minute! Yea, such is the precision with which the motions of the heavenly bodies are capable of being ascertained, that an astronomer in an observatory could say: I will fix a telescope opposite that window, with two threads of spider's-web placed across one another in the centre of its glass, and if one touches on them for a thousand years, I can tell at what

hour, what minute, what second, any given world shall pass the intersection of those two threads at the end of a thousand years, after having travelled millions of millions of miles in all directions of the universe.—Yea, I can even tell at what distance from the earth that star will be at the expiration of three thousand years.

How is it that astronomers are able to predict such things? Because it is the will of God, who is omnipotent, to show us by the permanence of his laws in nature, that he is a God of order, and a God of truth, with whom there is not yea and nay, but that what he is pleased to begin, his hand, without fail, will accomplish.

Now God is Sovereign and true in the Bible, as he is Sovereign and true in the heavens.—And as the astronomer, with his telescope in his hand can predict, ages before, the positions of the heavenly bodies, their motions, changes, eclipses, and revolutions, so can the Christian, with the book of prophecy in his hand, predict ages before, the positions of kingdoms, their revolutions, victories, decline, eclipses, and their fall.

Yes, if God has caused them to be written in his sacred volume, they shall happen more certainly than the rising of the sun to-morrow; for the time shall come when that glorious orb shall shine no longer, and when the moon shall not give her light. But

“though heaven and earth pass away, the word of the Lord shall never pass away.”

I will give you one striking example of this:—The prophet here predicts that after Nebuchadnezzar, who was “the head of gold,” there should arise “another kingdom inferior to his,” which should overthrow the kingdom of Babylon, and was represented by “the breast and arms of silver.” This kingdom, I have already told you, was that of the Medes and Persians, which was to arise seventy years after, and to be established by a king named Cyrus, who had not yet come into the world. But further, two hundred years before Daniel, when the Persians were an insignificant people, dwelling in the mountains, unknown in the world, and especially unknown to the Jews, there lived a prophet who not only predicted the downfall of Babylon, but even called by name this Cyrus, who was to be born in this unknown country, and to be born, observe, 240 years after. This prophet was Isaiah.—Isa. xliv. and xlv. I shall request you to read these passages in a few moments.

Thus you see a mere child at Jerusalem, with this book of Isaiah in his hand, might have predicted the taking of Babylon by a man named Cyrus, just as an astronomer at Geneva, with his telescope in his hand, can predict an eclipse of the sun, which shall be visible in this place 1000 years hence.

How wonderful then is the God of the Bible ! how mighty, and how true ! Of this you shall meet abundant evidence in the book of this prophet. You will hear him foretel, for example, that the three first monarchies of the image were to last 540 years, and they did last 540 years ; that the Babylonish captivity was to continue 70 years, and it did continue 70 years ; that from the decree of Cyrus to the death of Jesus Christ, there were to elapse 70 weeks of years, or 490 years, and 490 years did elapse ; that one great event is to happen at the end of 1290 years ; another at the end of 1335 years ; and a third at the end of 2300 years, and all these periods must be fulfilled, as certainly as the eclipse next Thursday shall last the number of minutes and seconds which the astronomers have foretold.

Ah ! my friends, there is here something altogether divine. Hence, the greatest of mathematicians and astronomers, the most powerful mind perhaps that ever appeared in this world, the man who has enabled us to penetrate deepest into the mysteries of creation, the great Sir Isaac Newton, having set himself to the study of prophecy, was so filled with admiration at what he there discovered, that he exclaimed : "I have long studied the stars and the glory of God in creation ; I will now study Daniel and the glory of God in the prophecies of his word !"

Hence this great man has written two books, the one on “the principles of Natural Philosophy,” the other on the prophecies of Daniel and St. John, and on the important events which they predict; a book rich in that science and wisdom with which God had endowed him for other discoveries.

It may not be uninteresting to mention what it was, probably, that filled the mind of this illustrious philosopher with such a profound admiration for the study of prophecy. He had undertaken to fix with certainty, by means of eclipses, the chronology of ancient times; And in this manner I will search out, said he, in the historians of antiquity, all the accounts which they give of days, when ‘the sun was darkened and became the colour of blood, (for these phenomena striking them with terror, they seldom failed to record them in their writings;) and as by means of my calculations, I can fix with the greatest accuracy the year, day and hour of each eclipse, I shall be able to fix the precise date of all contemporary events. Thus when I read in Plutarch, that the sun was veiled in darkness in Italy, the year that Romulus founded the city of Rome, I can say with certainty, that this celestial phenomenon happened 753 years, b. c., on the 5th of July, at 4 o’clock, p. m.

But what connexion, you will ask, had this study with the prophecies? It had this: Newton in pursuing it was enabled to make

two observations. First, he saw, in thus counting back the years with the greatest exactness, that the epochs fixed by Daniel for the several events (for example, that of the seventy weeks of years) proved perfectly correct.

Again, a second subject of admiration was as follows: he employed for his computations a catalogue of eclipses, drawn up by a very ancient astronomer named Ptolemy. This man was a heathen, and lived only 140 years after Christ. He has left in his writings an account of astronomical observations made at Babylon, during a long series of years. Now what must have been Newton's admiration for Daniel, when he saw that the heathen Ptolemy, to mark the years of his eclipses, had divided the ages of antiquity exactly in the same manner as the Prophet had done 745 years before him; that is, the astronomer Ptolemy saw the four great monarchies in the past, as Daniel had seen them in the distant future. One would suppose, in reading Daniel, that he had followed Ptolemy, or in reading Ptolemy, that he had copied Daniel. Indeed, as this man of God, contemplating these four great empires which were to arise in the world, considers them under the figure of a single statue, and as forming, in a manner, only one kingdom, existing successively under the kings of Baby-

lon, Persia, and Greece, and finally under the Latin emperors and kings ; so in like manner does the heathen philosopher represent them, 745 years after him. Enumerating his eclipses by the reign of kings, he calculates them with reference to the same four monarchies which Daniel saw in a remote future, and he considers these monarchies as a succession of reigns, beginning with the kings of Babylon, and terminating with the Roman emperors.

But further, I would observe, that as in the image of Daniel, each of the four monarchies commences only when it takes the place of that which preceded it, so the heathen Ptolemy, in his list of kings, which he calls *a mathematical rule, or canon of kings*, counts the kings of Babylon only from the year when they made themselves masters of Babylon, and so for all the rest. Would not one imagine, I repeat, that the heathen philosopher had before his eye the image of the prophet ? And can you not conceive how Newton, who had occasion to refer so often to Ptolemy's catalogue, in studying the eclipses, must have been filled with admiration and wonder at this coincidence ?

Such was my first reflection. I have entered, perhaps, too much at length into it. But if all of you have not been able to follow me in my explanations, I hope, at least, you will be able to remember the general

drift of them. In a few words it is this. God rules the nations as he does the worlds ; he shows himself great and true in prophecy, as he does in astronomy ; he makes himself known in the revolutions of kingdoms, predicted and pre-determined in his counsels, as he does in the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, which travel night and day in immensity.

You will remember that I concluded my last lecture with two observations. The first was, that the history of a people is composed of two elements, always more or less united, yet always perfectly distinct, the *interests of its religion* and the *interests of its politics*, the history of the church and the history of the empire. My second was, that the only nations whose history we must expect to find in prophecy, are those which have had to do with the people of God.

Hence, when the prophecies speak of *the earth*, and sometimes of *the world*, we are to understand, by these expressions, the vast territory of the four monarchies, the empire of the image, and nothing more. This is what is called the *prophetic earth*, or the *prophetic world*. This empire, as I have already observed, is represented in Scripture as being, in a manner, *one* ; beginning with the kings of Babylon, and continued through the kings of Persia and Greece, and terminating in the Latin kings. Hence, both in

the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament we frequently find Rome called Babylon; because, in the eyes of the Holy Spirit, which embraces at one glance the whole succession of ages, the empire of Babylon was the commencement of the Roman empire, while the Roman empire, in its turn, was merely Babylon in its development and in plenitude.

This last remark is of importance, as it serves to throw considerable light on the study of prophecy.

Thus, when you read in the Revelation of St. John the description which he gives of the city of Rome, of what, xvii. "the city on seven mountains," as he calls it, ver. 9, "the city which reigned" in his time "over the kings of the earth," ver. 18, was to become; when he represents it as an adulterous church, under the figure of an empire prostitute, "clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls," xviii. 16, and when he concludes by telling you the name thereof, you will no longer be surprised to hear him call it "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth." ver. 5. "And he saw," he says, "upon her forehead, a name written." Can you tell me what was that name?

Mystery.

But what mystery ?

Babylon the Great.

He saw her riding, as it were, upon the Roman empire, that is, "sitting upon a beast with seven heads and ten horns," ver. 13, "sitting upon many waters," which represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," ver. 15: lastly, he saw her under the form of *a woman drunk*—drunk ! and with what wine ?

Drunk with blood.

And with what blood ?

With the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus.

And when John saw her, "*he wondered with a great admiration.*"

Thus, then, there can be no doubt (and, in fact, here all are agreed) that Rome is mystically called *Babylon*, by the Holy Spirit of God.

But while we are on this subject, I am desirous of making one observation more, which I think of importance. In order to invest all these facts with more interest, and to assist you in remembering them, I determined to make a drawing of the costume of the kings of Babylon ; and in doing this, I was led to look over those ancient historians who have given the most detailed account of the usages of the Chaldeans. One of these authors is a great geographer, named Strabo, born near

the country of the Medes, 46 years b. c. Another, who is called Herodotus, the most ancient of the Greek historians, was a learned traveller, who visited the city of Babylon himself. He wrote less than 100 years after Daniel.

We learn, from these historians, that the kings of Babylon wore on their finger a ring, which served them for a seal; on their feet *pantofles*, or slippers, which the kings they had subdued bowed down to kiss; on their person a white tunic or cassock, which hung down to their feet, and over that again a large white cloak. Lastly, their head-dress consisted of a *tiara*, or large, high, round cap, stiff and standing erect, with two pendant fillets, or bandelets, one on each side. The sovereign alone had a right to such an ornament; death was the penalty to any one who ventured to wear it; and medalists lay it down as a principle of their science, that all coins or moneys bearing the figure of a tiara, belong to the reign of some eastern prince.

Now, it is difficult for any one who has visited the city of Rome, and then reads these descriptions of the ancient historians, not to ask himself if they were not intended as an exact delineation of the prince who reigns in that metropolis. Indeed, in his whole person, from head to foot, he resem-

bles Nebuchadnezzar. On his finger he wears the ring, which serves him for a seal, called the *fisher's ring*, (*annulus piscatorius*,) which he receives at his coronation ; on his feet, the slippers which the kings of the west and their ambassadors stoop down to kiss ; on his person, the white tunic hanging down to his feet, over which a large white satin cloak, embroidered with golden stars, and with lappets stretching out to receive the incense ; but especially on his head the round, stiff, erect, and magnificent head-dress, which he calls his *tiara*, with two bandelets, or fillets, hanging down one on each side, like that of the kings of Babylon. He is the only modern prince who wears such a decoration on his head ; and this inimitable cap is so distinctive a part of his dress and symbol of his character, that he has assumed it as his crest and as the emblem of his power. It is emblazoned upon the walls of his palaces, upon the pillars of his temples, and upon the helms of his soldiers ; it is embroidered upon his standards, and you see it everywhere waving upon the seven hills. You will find a picture of it on the next page.

THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON.



It must be confessed that for its magnificence, this ornament is worthy the monarchs of Babylon. It is, say the historians, of inestimable price, *resplendent with gold and precious stones and pearls*, Rev. xvii. 4.

That of Clement VIII. was estimated at 500,000 pieces of gold; that of Martin V. had, we are told, 5½ lbs. of pearls, and 15 lbs. of gold. That of Paul IV. was studded with an enormous quantity of rubies, emeralds, chrysolites, diamonds, and pearls, purchased at an immense price; that of Paul V. was even still more magnificent. I have not heard the value of that of the reigning pontiff, Gregory XVI.

But there is another feature of likeness between Babylon the type, and Babylon the antitype, which I think of great importance, as serving to show the closeness of their resemblance. It is this, that the distinctive colour of both these courts was *scarlet*. We arrive at the knowledge of this striking point of analogy from the fifth chapter of Daniel, where, as you shall see hereafter, the prophet gives an account of that mysterious handwriting which appeared to Belshazzar, king of Babylon, while feasting with his nobles, the night of his fall. The astonished king sends for his astrologers, Chaldeans and sooth-sayers, to decipher these unintelligible characters, and thus release him from the horrible suspense in which his guilty mind is held. And what is the recompense which he offers to the successful interpreters? “And the king spake and said, whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be *clothed with scarlet*,” (in-

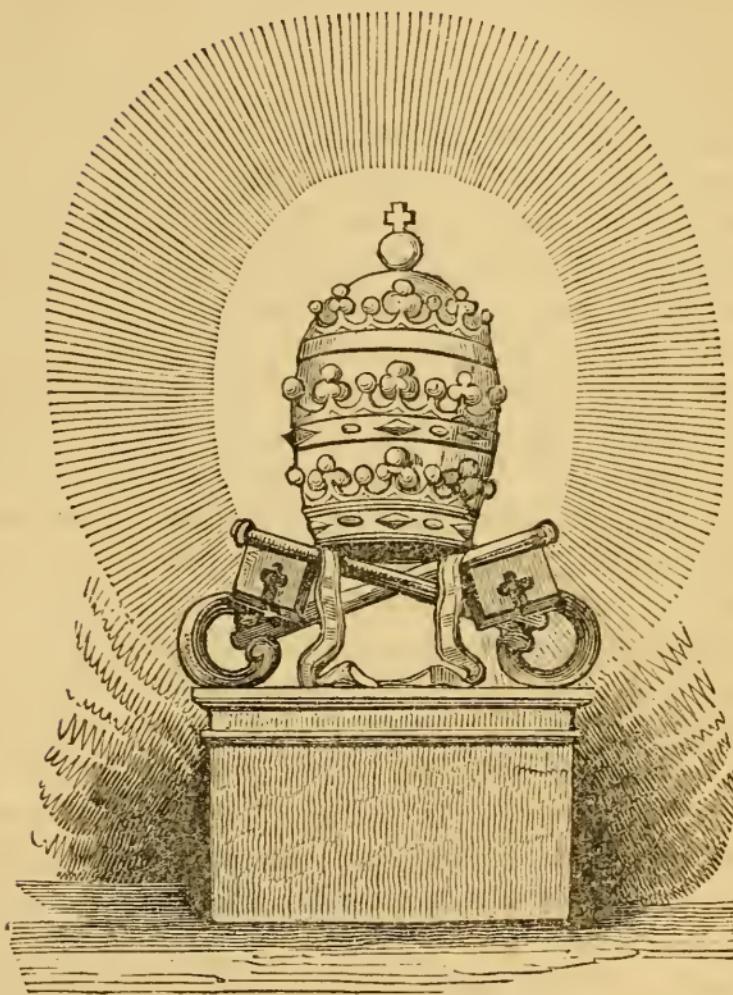
vested with the distinctive colour of the nobles and rulers of the empire,) “and have a chain of gold around his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom,” Daniel v. 7. Now, we read in Revelations xvii, that the woman whom the apostle saw in his vision, and upon whose forehead was written, mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, was seated upon a *scarlet-coloured beast, and was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour*, verses 3, 4; and, accordingly, we find that the very same colours distinguish, in the present day, the whole court of the Pope of Rome. His bishops are clothed in purple, his cardinals, or senators, in scarlet; hat, cap, stockings, gloves, shoes, gown, cloak, are all scarlet. When the cardinals are about to set him on the altar of God, in the place of the holy sacrament, for the purpose of adoring him, as they say themselves, he is borne beneath a scarlet canopy, on the shoulders of twelve men, clothed from head to foot in scarlet, while others, clothed likewise in scarlet, attend him on each side, with large fans of peacocks’ feathers in their hands.

Such, as to their external appearance, are the points of analogy between the prince designed by “the head of gold,” and him whose place is in the feet of the image. But there are points of difference which here deserve to be noticed.

1. His slippers, which kings and priests stoop down to kiss, adoring him, as the kings and astrologers used to do to the monarch of Babylon, are adorned with a figure which was not on those of Nebuchadnezzar. And what is that figure? Are we permitted to utter it without shuddering? They have dared to place on the upper part of his slipper the figure of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to adore the cross of Jesus Christ, people, priests, and princes, stoop down and kiss the shoe of this Italian priest !!

2. The Roman tiara is distinguished by two things, which we do not observe in the Babylonian. It is surmounted by a triple crown, which the Italians call the *triregno*, (three kingdoms,) a circumstance of which we shall see the providential and prophetic meaning in Daniel vii. 8, and 24. It has, besides, inscribed upon its front the word MYSTERIUM (mystery), Revelations xvii. 5, as we are informed by many travellers worthy of credit, who have read it with astonishment. When, at the coronation of the Pope, one of the cardinals places this triple crown upon his head, he repeats to him in Latin: "Revere this tiara, adorned with the triple crown, and know that thou art father of the princes of the world, (*rectorum orbis*,) and vicegerent upon earth of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE TRIPLE CROWN.



Thus, my friends, you see Babylon is Rome in its beginning, and Rome is Babylon in its development.

We shall have occasion to return more at

length to these facts. I have spoken of them here rather by anticipation.

Be not surprised at my entering into these details ; they may appear to you minute, insignificant, perhaps, even puerile ; but it is in their harmonious combination, it is in the astonishing assemblage of so many particular circumstances together, that their strength and their beauty consist. What constitutes the glory and certainty of prophecy is just the simultaneous concurrence of a multitude of little events, of trifling circumstances, improbable, unforeseen, undesigned, insignificant, if taken alone, but by their union rendered powerful and irresistible. It is herein that God shows his power, and his word its truth. What more insignificant than a few scattered rays of light passing through an opening in the shutter, and playing on my hand ; but let them be collected to a point in a burning-glass, and you will soon see the power of God. These pencils of light, once united, will burn wood, melt the hardest metals, and even consume stones. It is just so with prophecy. Like a burning-glass, it collects, as it were, to a common focus, the minutest facts, and the most insignificant circumstances ; and thus it kindles a light which fills truth with brightness and consumes error.

You have already seen a remarkable instance of this. Rome, when she led to the stake the Husses, the Jeromes, and innu-

merable other witnesses of Jesus, caused a tiara, with figures of devils and flames of fire painted on it, to be placed on their head. But she herself, drunk with the blood of the saints, has been led, without knowing it, to place on her own head the tiara of Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

But let us resume the explanation of the verses before us.

23. "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

You see, from this, that the prophecy which we are considering, reaches to those remote and glorious days called in scripture "*the latter times,*" "*the time of the end,*" that is, the time when the Lord shall establish his kingdom upon earth, having previously restored his people Israel to Jerusalem. Therefore, before we go further, it may be well to compare it with what our Lord has declared in Luke xxi. 4. Speaking of the time during which the Jews were to continue dispersed among the nations, and the Gentiles were to be in possession of Jerusalem, he says, "They shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Now, this is the period of the image; and

our Lord calls it *the times of the Gentiles*, because it is the time during which it is given to them to exercise their dominion over, and to consummate their oppression of, the people of God; for, after that they shall be broken, their power shall be taken away, and their dominion shall be given to the true worshippers of God, “the people of the saints of the Most High.”

31. “Thou, O king, sawest and behold! a great image.”

Remark here three things.

1. The monarchies represented by this image were to be idolatrous, and all their kings were to cause themselves to be worshipped. It is on this account they appeared to Nebuchadnezzar under the similitude of an image, or statue, such as he was accustomed to serve, or to cause to be served.

2. They were to be active, powerful, and formidable; and therefore it is that this personage appeared as a living being, standing on his feet, with menacing aspect, and, as it were, assuming before the monarch an imposing and terrible attitude.

3. These monarchies were to be surrounded with all that glory which men most admire; and hence it is that its “brightness was excellent.”

32. “This image’s head was of fine gold.”

37, 38. “Thou, O king, art a king of kings;

for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. 'Thou art this head of gold.'

Thou, not merely thyself, but thy family, thy dynasty, thy son, and thy grandson, who shall reign after thee. "Thou art the king of kings." Nebuchadnezzar was the successor of the kings of Assyria. The Assyrian was the most ancient and the noblest of monarchies. Since Nebuchadnezzar's father, it had become the empire of Babylon, and the Chaldeans formed but one kingdom with the Assyrians. The young king Nebuchadnezzar had met with the most extraordinary successes from the very commencement of his reign ; everything had given way to him. He had been led, from his victories and his brilliant achievements, to regard himself as the creator of his own magnificent fortune, and to look upon himself as a kind of demi-god. It is on this account that Daniel, in speaking of his power, takes care to tell him, "The God of heaven *hath given* thee a kingdom."

The prosperity of this monarch is, perhaps, unrivalled in history, and whatever may have been the glory of Cyrus, Alexander, and the Cæsars, the splendour of the kings of Baby-

lon has never been equalled. “ He was the head of gold.”

His magnificence became proverbial ; and the greatest monarchs of subsequent ages, in the height of their ambition, never dreamt of approaching it. He reigned forty-five years, (or if you count from the death of his father,) forty-three ; but he began at an early age his uninterrupted conquests. He took Jerusalem three times ; destroyed Nineveh ; conquered Persia ; demolished Tyre, the queen of the seas ; subdued a great part of Arabia ; made himself master of Egypt ; and two celebrated Greek historians go so far as to say, that he excelled the famous Hercules in the greatness of his exploits, that he pushed his conquests, in the north, into Thrace ; and on the west, all along the northern coast of Africa, and as far as Spain.

I shall have occasion presently to speak to you of his capital, Babylon. Never, it would appear, was there anything like it under the sun. Sixty miles in circumference, its walls were 350 feet high and 87 wide ; it had 100 gates, a tower 600 feet high, hanging gardens ; and a tunnel under the Euphrates, like that which is now constructed under the Thames.

This magnificence, however, was not to last ; and Daniel did not hide it from the king. From the midst of one of the most obscure provinces of the empire, the country

of Elam, afterwards called Persia, there was to arise a prince, who was to overthrow the mighty kingdom of Babylon 76 years later, and to put to death the children of Nebuchadnezzar.

39. “After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee.”

Persia was an inconsiderable province in the days of Daniel; but *it shall arise*, saith the prophet, it shall become the second monarchy—and yet, notwithstanding the greatness which it shall attain to, it shall never equal thine; this kingdom *shall be of silver, and shall be inferior to thine.*

And here observe, this second empire is represented by the breast and arms, “*the breast and arms were of silver.*”

Why this minuteness? It is far from being indifferent; and you shall see hereafter that it was impossible to describe more accurately this kingdom, which being at first composed of two distinct nations, the Medes and Persians, coalesced for the overthrow of the Babylonian empire. As in the human body the two arms unite above the breast, so in like manner the Medes and Persians united so as to form henceforth but one empire and one people.

The father of the young Cyrus had married the daughter of the king of the Medes; and he himself had been brought up at the court of his grandfather; he early distin-

guished himself by his shining virtues ; and when he was grown up, being placed at the head of the army, he obtained victory after victory, until, 70 years after the captivity of Daniel, he took the mighty Babylon, and immediately published a decree for the restoration of the Jews.

This is the place to read that wonderful passage relative to this prince in Isaiah, written 240 years before he came into the world. See Isaiah xliv. and xlv. Notice especially verses 1—6 of the latter chapter.

Now, suppose a book had been written at Geneva 200 years ago, containing a complete history of Napoleon, and even calling him by name, “I have called thee by name ; thou shalt be called Bonaparte ; thou shalt appear after two centuries have elapsed ; a mighty warrior, thou shalt subdue nations and loose the loins of kings ; from the Isle of Corsica shalt thou come, thou shalt make thyself master of France, conquer Italy, and the far distant Egypt, then return and subdue the continent of Europe, torment the nations, and then die on a rock in the midst of the sea.” What profound astonishment, what divine reverence would we feel for such a book ! Ah ! we need not wonder that Cyrus, after reading the book of the Jews, favoured that prophetic nation, and published an edict for their return to Judea.

Learn, then, from these facts, how precious

is the Bible to the true Christian, the Christian who knows that it was given him to lead him to God, to deliver him from the power of Satan, to publish to him the forgiveness of sins, to proclaim to him the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to lead him to everlasting life.

EIGHTH LESSON.

DANIEL ii. 37—39.

ON Sunday last we resumed the explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and Daniel's interpretation ; but we had only time to consider the first words, "Thou, O king, art a king of kings ; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. Thou art that head of gold," verses 37, 38. We shall now proceed to consider the *second monarchy*, and in explaining the verses before us, we shall direct your attention particularly to the series of emblems which the image brings under our notice, from the head even to the toes of the feet.

We read, "His breast and his arms were of silver, ver. 32 ; and again, "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee," ver. 39.

Here is the second monarchy ; and, in order to understand it, we must carefully notice four things.

1st.—There is a change of metal. It is not, properly speaking, a new empire, but a new people, a new language, a new dynasty,

which rises up to rule over the world, and to hold under its sway the people of God.

The time of the image ("the times of the Gentiles," according to our Lord, Luke xxi. 24,) that is, the period during which the Gentiles are to rule over Jerusalem, and to trample it under foot; this time began with the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors; it continued under Cyrus, king of Persia, and his successors; and afterwards, when the silver changed into brass, under Alexander and his successors; until, finally, when the brass became iron, the Latins took the place of the Greeks in governing the world and oppressing the people of God.

When the metal changes, it denotes a change of people and language. This is my first observation.

2. In the constitution of the image, there is no interval between the gold and the silver. The image, though composed of different metals, is *one*. It refers, therefore, to one and the same empire, commencing with the Chaldean kings, and continued, without interruption, in the Persian monarchs.

3. The second metal is inferior to the first; that was gold; this is silver; the empire which it represents must, therefore, be one, which, though powerful and terrible, was to be less brilliant, less rich, and less glorious than that of Babylon.

4. This second kingdom is not represented

by the breast alone, but also by the two arms, which are expressly, and not without intention, mentioned in the prophecy, ver. 39. It was, therefore, to be an empire, which, though in its commencement composed of two kingdoms, was soon after to be consolidated into one.

But here, before proceeding further, I wish to notice a course of interpretation which deserves your particular attention. It is this, that the chronology of the four monarchies is taught us in the image, *by the respective height of the different emblems by which they are represented*. I mean, that in the history of the monarchies, the order of their times follow exactly the order in which the members of the human body, from the head to the feet, are placed. Thus, the head represents the most ancient of the monarchies, because it commands the whole body; then comes the breast, and as the arms are situated at the upper part of the breast, and are joined to it at the shoulders, they clearly typify two kingdoms; which from their commencement join together to exercise a common dominion, and to be separated no more.

And observe, that with the third monarchy it is quite the reverse; for here not only does the belly of brass come below the breast of silver, that is the monarchy represented by the belly follows that symbolized by the

breast ; but the thighs of brass being situated beneath the belly, intimates that it was in the latter times of its empire that the third monarchy, at first one, was to be divided into two.

And observe, further, that below the thighs of brass, the legs of iron intimate a fourth and last monarchy ; that below the place where these legs have become iron, this metal changes, and becomes mixed with clay ; while, below this mixture, the feet divide into ten toes, to denote that the fourth monarchy was to be broken up into two kingdoms, after having previously undergone the change represented by the mixture of the clay with the iron.

Such, then, is the very simple principle which determines, with equal clearness and precision, the chronology of the four monarchies, *by the respective height of the emblems of the image*. I shall, hereafter, point out the marks, equally precise, by which we are enabled to fix their geography with satisfactory exactness.

But we now return to the breast and arms of silver. If you open the book of ancient scripture history, you will see with admiration how perfectly it agrees with that of prophecy.

Do you know what monarchy overthrew that of the Chaldeans ?

That of Cyrus the Great.

The people of that monarch were composed of two nations. Who were they?

The Medes and Persians.

Until that time these two races, composed themselves of different mountain tribes, had formed two distinct kingdoms; but being united under Cyrus, they formed from henceforth but one people, so that the Persians, who before were very inferior to the Medes, and had not risen until after them, soon acquired the ascendant, through the influence of Cyrus.

This same circumstance you will find represented in chap. viii. under the emblem of “a ram with two horns,” and “the higher came up last.” And lest we should mistake the meaning of these prophetic representations, and indulge in our own imaginations, Daniel takes care to tell us, “The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of the Medes and Persians.”

I shall now relate, in a few words, for the benefit of those who are unacquainted with it, the history of the second kingdom.

Five years after the day when the young prophet Daniel revealed to the king of Babylon the destinies of these kingdoms, that is 600 years before Christ, there was born in a mountainous country, subject at that time to Nebuchadnezzar, and called Elam or Persia, a male child, whose parents gave him the

name of *Cyrus*. His father and mother were heathens; they lived 1200 miles from Jerusalem, and were very far from suspecting that the name of their infant had been written 240 years before, in the sacred book of a weak and despised nation, then in bondage at Babylon. How could they, who were themselves the tributaries of the great Nebuchadnezzar, have supposed that it was predicted in this book that their little Cyrus was chosen of the God of heaven to subdue nations, unloose the loins of kings, and to say to Jerusalem: “Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundations shall be laid.”

Yet so it was; and what the Lord had decreed concerning this child of the mountains, was to have its accomplishment in due time.

Cyrus's mother was the daughter of the prince of the Medes; his father was prince of the Persians. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian yoke being mitigated, the king of the Medes soon became powerful; and his daughter sent the youthful Cyrus to be educated at the court of his grandfather. Here he soon made himself admired and loved by every one. He was placed at the head of the army of the Medes and Persians, who had revolted against the king of Babylon. Cyrus was everywhere victorious; he obtained immense conquests, and at length, having laid siege to the power-

ful Babylon, he took it, and slew the king, and thus became master of the world, and liberator of the children of Israel. God touched his heart in their favour, so that he set them free, after a captivity of seventy years, and sent them back to their own country by a solemn decree, in which he said to Jerusalem, “Be thou built; and to the temple, let thy foundations be laid.” Read Isa. xiv. 26—28, and xlvi. 1—6; and remember that these passages were written 240 years before the birth of Cyrus, and 1200 miles from the place of his nativity.

But enough respecting the breast and arms; let us now proceed to the *third monarchy*.

In the 32nd ver. we read:—“The belly and thighs” of the image “were of brass;” and lower down, ver. 39, we are told of “a third kingdom,” which was “to bear rule over all the earth.”

Mark, attentively, these three circumstances.

1. The brass followed the silver, and immediately, without any interval blended with it. A third empire, therefore a third people, a third language, was to arise and to follow immediately, the people and language of the Persians, in the government of the nations and the dominion of the people of God.

2. Brass is less brilliant than silver, as silver is less so than gold. This monarchy,

therefore, was to be less rich, and less glorious than that of Cyrus, though it was to rule over the whole of the earth then known to the people of God.

3. Not merely the belly, but likewise the thighs also, were of brass. The third empire, therefore, after having formed one single and all powerful kingdom, was, in the latter times of its dominion, to separate into two states, formed out of the same people, and speaking the same language.

And, now, what is that kingdom? Doubtless you have already named it in your own minds; those of you at least who have any acquaintance with ancient history. It is that of Alexander the Great, the king of Macedonia, and general of the Greeks. This is what is called the *Grecian empire*. And if you had read the eighth chapter of Daniel, you could have told this without having any knowledge of history whatsoever; for in that passage, the prophet not only represents it under the image of a *he-goat*, but he designates it at full length by its name. "The rough goat," he tells us, "is the king of Grecia." He even goes further, for he explains to us, (chap. viii. and xi.,) what we are to understand by the thighs of brass situated below the belly in the image. The third monarchy, he tells us, that is the Grecian, was to be divided into four kingdoms; and subsequently, two of these four, (the only

two with which the people of God were to be connected,) were to become more considerable than the others; so that one of them, (the king of Syria,) was to be called *the king of the North*, and the other, (the king of Egypt,) *the king of the South*. Read chap. viii. 21, 22, and xi. 2—5, and you will acknowledge it is impossible for anything to be clearer.

Now, if you turn to the page of history, you will find it to contain an exact repetition of what you have read in these wonderful times of the prophet Daniel.

Two hundred and forty-nine years after the day on which Daniel explained futurity to the king of Babylon, there was born in the little kingdom of Macedonia, a child, who was afterwards to be called Alexander the Great, and was destined to conquer the then known world. Scarcely had he arrived at the years of manhood, when he became a great and redoubtable warrior; he was not more than twenty-one years of age when all the states of Greece named him as their general, to attack the powerful empire of the Medes and Persians, and the year following he passed over into Asia. He conquers every thing in his way; he marches, or rather flies like the whirlwind; the most impregnable fortresses fall before him; the most formidable armies are destroyed in a day; the mighty Tyre is burnt to the ground; Gaza is demo-

lished; Egypt is conquered in a few weeks; Babylon opens her gates; the ill-fated king of the Medes and Persians, after being pursued for a long time, falls covered with wounds; and after five years of rapid and successful war, such as never had been seen before, this young prince, scarcely twenty-six years of age, mounts the throne of Nebuchadnezzar and of Cyrus, and beholds himself monarch of the world, and “master of the land and the sea.”

Scarcely, however, has this young conqueror returned from the far distant Hydaspes and Indus, and re-entered Babylon, which he designed to make the centre of his empire, when he is seized with a violent fever, and after a few days dies. In vain does he plunge several times into the Euphrates; in vain does he immolate innumerable victims in the temples of Babylon; in vain are all the arts of medical science brought to his aid; he is called to surrender up his palaces, his armies, his empires, with his life, at the age of thirty-two; death in a moment silences that commanding voice which made the earth to tremble, and he for whom, the evening before, the world seemed too small, is enclosed in a tomb of porphyry, which has lately been found in Egypt, and is now in the Museum of London.

Five years after his death, his wife, his brothers, his sisters, and his children, had all

perished ; and his generals, plunged in blood, were now disputing for his vast empire. At length, after thirty years of war, they "divided it toward the four winds of heaven," into four kingdoms, two of which (the only ones that had to do with the people of God,) soon became more powerful than the others. These were, north of Jerusalem, *the Grecian kingdom of the Seleucidæ, in Syria*; and, south of Jerusalem, *the Grecian kingdom of the Ptolemies of Egypt*. Seleucus and Ptolemy were two of Alexander's generals ; and their descendants, who, in Daniel, are called *the king of the North and the king of the South*, reigned until the arrival of the Romans, and ruled, in turn, over the people of God. Thus has the word of God been accomplished in the destinies of the three first kingdoms. We shall see in our next lecture those of the fourth.

NINTH LESSON.

DANIEL XI. 40—46.

ON Sunday last we considered, from the words of Daniel, three of the great monarchies, which, after his time, were to govern the world, and to rule over the people of God. It now remains for us to take a view, first, of the fourth monarchy, that is, of the legs of iron, the feet of iron and clay, with the toes; and then, of the fifth, the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which is to break in pieces the feet of the image, to reduce to powder the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, and to become a great mountain, filling the whole earth.

You remember the two great revolutions which have already been brought before us. After the domination of Nebuchadnezzar, we saw Cyrus coming from the east with his Medes and Persians; and after them Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, rushing from the west, at the head of his countless phalanxes of Greeks.

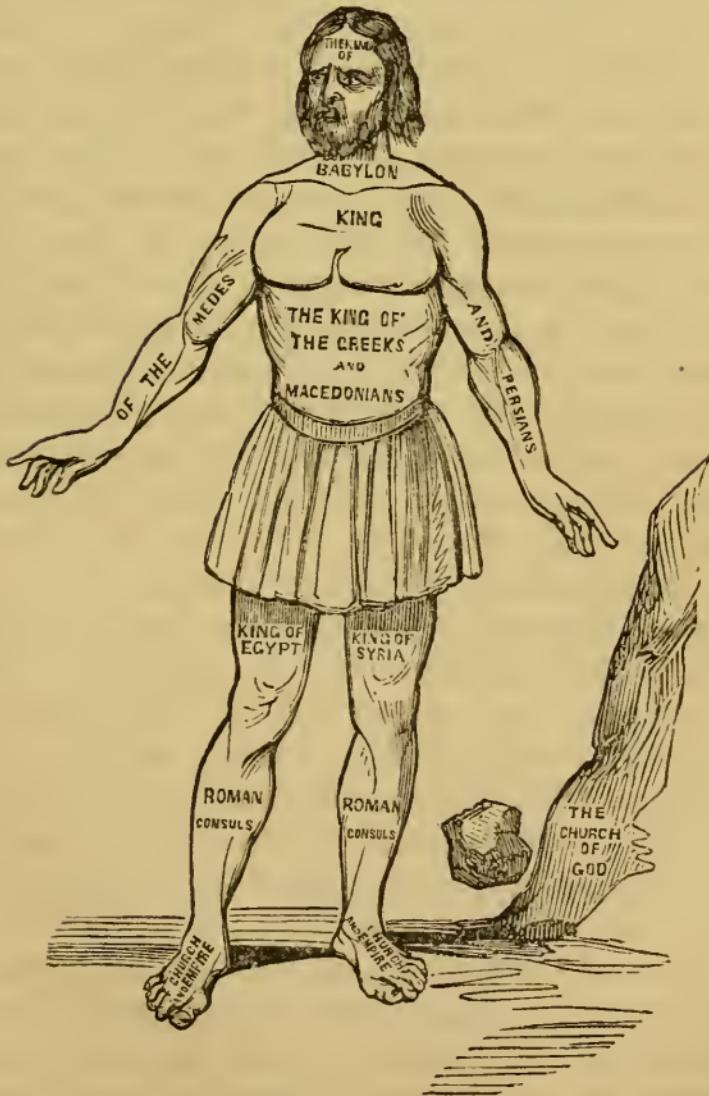
But before we resume the explanation of our verses, I wish to show you the picture which I have prepared for you, as it will enable you to form a correct idea of the suc-

cession, connexion, and chronological order of these great events.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S VISION.

The year 605 before

Jesus Christ.



What is the chronological principle of the emblems of this image? Their respective height in the image. You can easily distinguish it in this picture. Observe: the head of gold commences in the year 605 b. c.; for it was then Nebuchadnezzar ascended his throne. The arms of silver begin in 538, the year in which Darius, the Mede, and Cyrus, the Persian, his sister's son, took Babylon, and formed a new empire. The belly of brass begins in 330, when Alexander the Great destroyed the monarchy of the Persians, and assumed their place. The belly of brass is superseded by the thighs of brass in 300 b. c., when the generals of Alexander the Great divided his empire, Seleucus taking *Syria*, and the country east as far as India, and Ptolemy causing himself to be acknowledged king of Egypt.

I happened to take up a book the other day, which struck me in a very forcible manner, and which, most unexpectedly, but most agreeably, suggested to me the ideas which I am now laying before you. It was the travels of two Englishmen along the banks of the river Euphrates, in the plains of Babylon. I said that never had there existed in the world a more magnificent city; its walls were sixty miles in circumference, eighty-seven feet thick, and 300 feet high; its quays along the Euphrates were of the same height; its palaces, of inimitable splendour,

rose to an elevation of 600 feet; it had, besides, hanging gardens, and other wonders of the extraordinary genius of Nebuchadnezzar. But what do you think these Englishmen did? they rode at full gallop over the site of Babylon, and they searched for Babylon. They searched for it, and they found it not; for it no longer exists, and its place knoweth it no more. According to the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, which I regret I have not time to quote here, it has become "pools of water, and a lurking-place for wild beasts." In a word, they beheld an extensive plain, alternately dry, barren, and sandy, or covered with pools of water and vast marshes, and studded with innumerable little hillocks, which were evidently only heaps of ruins. This was Babylon the Great. They could have no doubt that there once had existed upon this spot a large and populous city; for they descried on an eminence more considerable than the rest, and evidently composed of rubbish, a very lofty ruin. They proceeded in the direction of it; but before they reached it, one of them espied, a great way off, on the summit of this mound, four small black points, which seemed to move. What can these moving objects be? exclaimed they; they must be some of the marauding Arabs, who abound in these deserts; but one of them, taking out his glass, and applying it to his eye, dis-

covered them to be four magnificent lions, who were thus walking about around the ruins of Babylon, where they had made their den, as on their own domain.

Such is the end of Babylon, that city which was called “the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee’s excellency, the hammer of the whole earth.” It has become the abode of wild beasts, and pools of water; there remaineth nothing of it, nothing of the Persians, nothing of the Macedonians, nothing of the Romans; but the word of the Lord, the book of the oracles of the living God is eternal; it is immutable, and shall never pass away!

Yes; 2443 years ago, on the banks of that river, Euphrates, where now the lion of the desert prowls, there stood a magnificent city; there were sumptuous palaces—a conquering people—an immense commerce—sages, astronomers, politicians, generals, governors, kings, queens, princes, splendid feasts, melodious concerts, acclamations of joy and triumph. In the midst of all this bustle and magnificence, 606 b. c., in one of the gorgeous apartments of the royal palace, might have been seen, on his princely throne, a conqueror who had made the world tremble, and before him, a young man, revealing to him the history of four monarchies, the destinies of future empires, as we relate the events of the past. These empires have

risen and have fallen, as all the powers of this earth must, in like manner, fall ; but this book, which predicts their rise and their fall —this book, which we hold in our hands, while we ourselves are passing away—this book shall never pass away.

Now, let us see the fate of the fourth empire.

Read verse 33, and verses 40, 43.

This is what we have now to explain. But before we open the page of history for this purpose, let us first endeavour to ascertain from the words of the prophet themselves, what were to be the characteristics and the destiny of the fourth monarchy.

1. It was to be “of iron,” ver. 33 ; it was to be “strong as iron,” ver. 40 ; for, “as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, so was it to break in pieces and bruise.” This fourth empire, therefore, was to be that of a people more warlike, more cruel, more powerful, and more oppressive than any of the preceding.

2. It was first represented by *two legs*, because it was not at first to be monarchical, but republican, and governed by two heads of equal power.

3. The toes of the feet are expressly mentioned in the prophecy, which, according to the ordinary language of emblems, intimates that the fourth kingdom, in the latter times

of its dominion, was to be divided into ten kingdoms, and to continue so still, as the Latin empire, under this new form; just as we have seen the empire of brass continued to exist, after its division, in the two thighs of brass. And, if you desire an infallible interpretation of this emblem, you will find it in chap. vii., where the prophet represents the same four monarchies under the similitude of four beasts; the fourth of which had ten horns, even as the feet of the image had ten toes; while the following explanation is given by one of those present. “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise,” verses 23, 24.

4. “The legs were of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay;” and again, “the feet and the toes were part of iron and part of potter’s clay,” because the kingdom was to be “divided, and partly strong and partly weak,” verses 33 and 41.

These last particulars intimate that a change was to be wrought in the internal constitution of the kingdom; by which I mean, that it was not to be an external division, like that which the ten toes symbolize, but an intestine, essential division into two governments, two peoples, two languages, or two powers; a division which was to be common to the ten kingdoms, in which both

the feet of the image and each of the ten toes should alike partake.

5. According to our rule of chronology, which determines the succession of times by the respective height of the emblems in the image, this internal, essential change, in the constitution or government of the fourth kingdom, was to take place towards the end of its dominion. But, at the same time, it was to be wrought *before the division of the empire*, since it commenced above the toes.

6. And lastly, the iron and potter's clay, though existing together in the feet of the image, could not, however, blend with one another; and this emblem, as it is explained, ver. 43, intimated that the two parts of this division, introduced into the fourth empire, should *unite, without ever being confounded*. "They shall mingle themselves with, or, by the seed of men;" that is, they shall be taken from among the same races and the same families, without ever being able to form a real coalition.

I shall now, my dear children, open the book of history, and those among you who have any acquaintance with Roman history, cannot fail to be filled with admiration at the accuracy of this portrait. Never, even since the accomplishment of the events, has one been drawn in so few words, equally accurate and perspicuous, and consequently

equally calculated to give an epitome of the whole history. You shall soon have reason to acknowledge this.

The fourth empire was of iron—"of iron!" And how is it possible more accurately to describe the character of the Romans?—everything in them was of iron; their government was of iron, hard, inflexible, pitiless. Their courage was of iron, cruel, sanguinary, indomitable.—Their soldiers were of iron; never were a people armed in a more formidable manner for war; their cuirasses, their helmets, their long bucklers, their javelins, their spears, their short, heavy two-edged swords, all their arms, were ingeniously terrible. Their discipline was of iron. The Jewish general, Josephus, who saw their whole army file off, when about to march against Jerusalem, gives us a description of it. "These laws," he says, "decree the penalty of death, not only for desertion, but for the smallest acts of negligence; and however severe are these laws, the officers who enjoin the observance of them are still more so." Their yoke was of iron, heavy, insupportable, and yet irresistible. In their conquests they spared nothing, they reduced all the vanquished countries to provinces; they left them nothing of their nationality; they deprived them, in a short time, even of their language; it soon became necessary to speak the Latin language, not only in all Italy, but

in Germany, south of the Danube, in all France, in Babylon, Switzerland, at Geneva, in Spain, Portugal, and even in Africa. Their hearts were of iron. They knew no pity; they shed human blood like water. They had need of these cannibal pleasures in peace as well as in war. They never cut off a man's head until they had first torn his flesh to the bone with flexible sticks, which they called rods. Whenever they had conquered a king, he was bound to the chariot of their general on the day of his triumphant entry into Rome, and during the banquet which he gave to his army, the unhappy captive was whipped in the public square, his head was then cut off amid acclamations of glory, and dragged by a hook through the streets to the river Tiber. When Julius Cæsar, who conquered all France, and reduced it to a Roman province, had taken its last remaining city, he caused both the hands of all the men whom he found in it to be cut off; and he even boasts of this himself in his Commentaries. Even in their amusements they could not do without human blood. In all their cities they had theatres for their entertainment, in which they obliged their unhappy prisoners of war to fight, either with wild beasts or with one another, until they were killed, and at these shows the Roman ladies as well as the men were present. When one of the combatants received a wound, the

people all cried out *he has it, he has it!* Whereupon he was obliged to lower his buckler, to kneel on one knee upon the ground, and to stretch forth his neck with theatrical grace, that his head might be cut off; upon this, the people, men and women, made a sign by holding up their thumb; and immediately the conqueror approached the conquered, and applying his sword to his neck, above the shoulders, plunged it in, up to the hilt, when, if the unhappy man met his death in a graceful and heroic manner, a burst of applause from the whole assembly accompanied his last sigh. When Julius Cæsar, on his return from France, entertained the citizens of Rome with festivals, there were combats of this kind, we are told, in all the streets of that immense city. The famous Titus, who took Jerusalem, and was called the mildest of men, and "the delight of mankind," caused all the old, the sick, and the deformed to be put to death, and in his triumphant march to Rome, he had 80,000 young Jews in his retinue, whom he caused to be beheaded, or gave to be devoured by wild beasts, for the amusement of the people in the several cities through which he passed. On one day, for example, the 24th of October, he had 500 men put to death, some of whom were burned, others beheaded, and others devoured by wild beasts.

“ The legs were of iron. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron : forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things ; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces, and bruise,” ver. 40.

Again, in the seventh chapter, where the prophet speaks of the fourth monarchy under the figure of four wild beasts, you will find him representing the fourth as “ dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and as having great iron teeth : and it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet.”

We said, in the second place, that this fourth kingdom being represented, from the commencement, *by the two legs of iron*, intimated that it was to be governed by two chiefs, or heads, of equal power. And such was the case with the Roman empire at the time when it became a part of the image, that is, when, by the destruction of the Greek kingdom of Syria, and its reduction to a Roman province under Pompey, it obtained possession of Jerusalem. It was not then a monarchy, but was governed by two heads equal in power, called consuls, in whose name the affairs of the commonwealth were administered, and who served to designate the years of the empire in the public annals.

We said, in the third place, that as the empire was afterwards represented by the ten toes of the image, this intimated that it

was to be divided into ten kingdoms ; and lastly, that this division was to take place in the latter times of its dominion.

And this, in fact, is exactly what did happen 400 years after Christ. Almost at the same moment, ten Gothic nations, speaking the same language, (a kind of German,) warlike and cruel, and countless as the sand, were seen pouring from the remote regions of the north, towards the frontiers of the fourth kingdom : they crossed the Danube and the Rhine, seized upon the Roman empire, and established themselves in its capital, A. D. 476. But soon they too adopted the customs, the religion, the worship, and even the very language of the Romans ; so that they continued the fourth empire under another form, and their church was called the Latin church, their religion the Romish religion, their empire the Latin empire, their sacred language the Latin language, and their history for ages, the history of the church and empire.

Time will not permit me to dwell on these important events of history : I shall merely mention the names of these two nations, and these ten kings, as we shall have occasion to speak of them again more at length, when we come to explain the seventh chapter.

1. The *Visigoths*, under king Alaric, who settled in Spain.

2. The *Ostrogoths*, under Theodoric, who established themselves in Italy.
3. The *Heruli*, under king Odoacer, who took Rome, proclaimed that prince king of Italy and of the Heruli.
4. The *Lombards*, under king Alboin, who took possession of upper Italy.
5. The *Franks*, under king Pharamund. These spoke German, also ; they took Paris, and a great part of the surrounding country.
6. The *Burgundians*, who made themselves masters of part of France and Switzerland. Their king, Gondeband, who likewise spoke German, resided in Geneva.
7. The *Alans*, under their king, Gonderic, who established themselves in France, for example, in the city of Alençon, so called from them, and in Spain, from whence the name of Catalonia, Goth-Alans.
8. The *Suevi*, under king Hermanric, who settled south of the Danube, in the country called after them Suabia.
9. The *Gepidæ*, under king Cunemond, who settled in Belgium and Pannonia.
10. The *Vandals*, who, under the terrible Genseric, established themselves, first in Spain, to part of which they gave the name of Andalusia or Vandalusia ; and then in Africa, where they founded the new kingdom of Carthage.

Some persons have wished to include

among them the Anglo-Saxons, who established themselves in England, and the Huns, who ravaged the world under the celebrated Alaric; but this is erroneous: with regard to the former, because England did not form a part of the prophetical earth; and with regard to the latter, because, though they devastated the Roman empire, they did not settle in it, and they were neither of the same language, nor of the same race as the other kingdoms.

But time admonishes me, and I must defer until another occasion the consideration of the mixture of the potter's clay with the iron, and of the final destiny of the fourth empire.

One observation more only would I make in conclusion. In tracing out the fourth kingdom on the Atlas of Lesage, I have been struck with admiration at its uniformity with the account of Daniel. Lesage, or Las Casas, you are aware, was the friend of the Emperor Napoleon, and while he was with his master in St. Helena, he drew up a series of synoptical charts, in which he distinguishes both the empires and their sub-divisions by different colours, with a view to bringing within the comprehension of the young, the most important events of history.

This learned scholar, who, I believe, is still alive, when he composed his book, by the side of his friend Napoleon, was far from thinking of Daniel, who, however, could

have dictated it to him 2443 years before, by the side of his friend, the Emperor Nebuchadnezzar. What would have been his astonishment, could he have seen the striking resemblance between his labours and those of the prophet! Like Daniel, he divides the history of the world into four parts, and he employs four colours to designate the empires of the Babylonians, of the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. The Macedonian empire he divides into four kingdoms; noticing, at the same time, two as much more powerful than the others, namely, the Syrian and the Egyptian; and lastly, when he treats of the Romans, he divides them as we have done, in reference to the invasion of the Barbarians; except that he has fallen into the error of including among them the Huns and the Anglo-Saxons. Thus, the friend of Napoleon, and the friend of Nebuchadnezzar, have given the history of the world in the same way, the one before, the other after the events, the one 600 b. c., the other 1800 after Christ; that is, the former nearly 2443 years before the latter. This difference, however, is still between them, that the history of Daniel reaches much further than that of Las Casas, and that he speaks of a fifth monarchy, of which the latter takes no notice.

TENTH LESSON.

DANIEL xi. 41—44.

LORD ! teach us to know the value of those prophecies of thy word, those histories of the world, written twenty centuries before the events, those permanent miracles which increase in brightness with the lapse of time, and attest with so much force the truth of thy scriptures, the sovereignty of thy decrees, the faithfulness of thy promises, the security, the future glory of thy redeemed people ; those miracles, which remind us every day that as surely as we have seen the Nebuchadnezzars, the Cyrusess, the Alexanders, the Pompeys, and the Cæsars, appearing on the stage, in their appointed times, so surely shall we see the happy and glorious kingdom of thy Christ, that stone which is to break in pieces the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold, that mountain which is to fill the whole earth, embracing all nations !

Yet, O my God, even this is not enough ! It is not sufficient for us to have seen miracles without us ; there is also a miracle which must be wrought in our own souls. Thou hast said, “ They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them ; for if they hear

not them, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” Open, then, Lord, our eyes; bless to us, by thy Spirit, the words of Moses and the prophets; let all our hearts feel their happy influence, that we may turn away from our idols to serve thee, the true and living God, and to wait for thy Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

On Sunday last we were occupied in considering the fourth empire, and we confined ourselves to the words of Daniel, endeavouring to ascertain from them what were to be its characteristics and its destinies. We saw that it was to be like “iron,” that it was at first to be governed by two magistrates, and subsequently divided into ten kingdoms. We enumerated these ten kingdoms, and we might here point out to you on the map, the place which each of them occupied in the European Roman empire. But we shall not enter, for the present, into these details; 1st, because we have not yet fixed the geography of this prophecy; and, 2dly, because we shall have occasion hereafter to revert to the subject more at large, when we come to explain the seventh chapter of Daniel.

There now remain for us three things to do, in order to complete the interpretation of this supernatural vision.

1. We must ascertain by what principles

we can determine the *geography* of these four empires, as we have already done their chronology ; and we must endeavour to bring these two elements into an exact and satisfactory agreement.

2. We must explain what is meant by the potter's clay, which is mixed with the iron in the legs of the image, or rather from the ankles downwards.

3. If time permit us, we must endeavour to discover what the Spirit of God intended to teach us concerning *the fifth and last monarchy*, which is yet to arise in the world, to break in pieces all the others, and to last for ever. See verses 44, 45.

Let us begin the geography of Daniel's four monarchies.

If I were to show you a map of the prophetic earth, and to ask you to point out to me Babylon and the river Euphrates, or Susa, the capital of Persia, and the river Ulai ; or Greece, (the country of Javan,) the kingdom of Shittim, and that little territory of Macedonia, which Alexander the Great possessed before his gigantic conquests ; or Italy, the city of Rome, and the river Tiber, doubtless you would have no difficulty in doing so.— But if I were to demand something more particular, probably you would feel not a little at a loss.

For example, what answer would you give me, if I were to ask you to which of

the four kingdoms Egypt belonged? or if I were to demand in what part of the world the two kings who were to divide the fourth empire were to appear? Why it was not in France, in Spain, in Africa, rather than in Greece or Egypt? You would probably have some difficulty in telling me.

Or, if I were to ask you in which of the four empires we are to place Geneva? Whether in the Roman; and wherefore? Why are we not to reckon Holland, Lower Germany, or England in it? You would, perhaps, be equally at a loss.

First, let us say a few words about Geneva, since we are at Geneva.—This will assist you in understanding the rest.

While the river Euphrates rolled its yellow waters beneath the lofty towers of Babylon, in the days of Daniel, 600 years b. c., the beautiful and transparent Rhone flowed beneath the walls of Geneva; its waves issued from our lake, limpid and blue, as they do in our own day; the image of the stars was reflected upon its crystal surface, in the silence of the night; Orion, Sirius, and the Great Bear, were pictured there in turn, as yesterday evening; but then, on the banks of the Euphrates, Daniel knew the Saviour, "his death, his sufferings, and the glory which was to follow;" his confidence was in Him; while those who dwelt on our banks were in the darkness of the shadow of death,

“being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.” They worshipped trees and serpents, and the thunders of the heavens; they cast their children into the lake, in honour of their false gods; and in times of great calamity, they filled a gigantic image of osier work, as high as one of our houses, with living men, and set it on fire to appease their idols.

Such was the condition of our fathers 550 years after Daniel, in the time of Julius Cæsar, who visited Geneva with his legions, and has given us the account himself.

Geneva, from its advantageous situation, must have been inhabited from the earliest times. The first intelligence, however, which we have of it in history, is in the year 58, b. c., about the period when Pompey overthrew the Greek kingdom of Syria, took Jerusalem, and destroyed one of the thighs of brass, substituting in its place one of *the legs of iron* of the fourth kingdom.

Think not, dear children, that what I here tell you of Geneva is foreign to our subject; on the contrary, you will see that these details will essentially assist you in understanding our explanations, in reference to the geography and chronology of the legs of iron.

This Pompey the Great, who took Jerusalem and destroyed the first thigh of brass,

was one of the most skilful and illustrious generals of the Romans ; he had carried on war in Italy, Sicily, France, Spain, Africa, and even to the then known extremities of Asia ; everywhere he had been victorious ; and when he entered Rome, on his return from Jerusalem, 324 kings, queens, princes, and princesses of the countries which he had subdued, magnificently attired, walked in chains before his triumphal chariot ; among whom were the kings of Armenia and of Colchis, five sons of the king of Pontus, a queen of Scythia, Aristobulus, the unfortunate kings of the Jews, and his son, the young prince Antigonus.

But this general, Pompey, had for his colleague another Roman general, whose daughter he had married, and with whom he soon quarrelled. His father-in-law was the famous *Julius Cæsar*, the most successful, able, and formidable of the Roman commanders. Only five years before the taking of Jerusalem by Pompey, 58 b. c., he came to Geneva to oppose the Swiss or Helvetians, who dwelt on the other side of the Rhone ; and to the number of 200,000 were desirous to cross it, for the purpose of establishing themselves in France. On his arrival, he set his whole army and all the neighbouring country to work, and erected, along the left bank of the Rhone, a strong wall eighteen miles long and sixteen feet high, flanked with lofty towers,

at proper intervals, and accompanied by a deep and wide trench. The Swiss, unable to cross the river, entered France by the *Fort de l'Ecluse*; but Cæsar followed them, slew 100,000, and having compelled the remainder to lay down their arms, sent them back as tributaries into their own country. After this, in less than ten years, he conquered all France, took 800 cities, and slew, it is said, 1,000,000 men; and shortly after, quarrelling with his son-in-law, Pompey, he overcame him, and continued to pursue him until his head was cut off. It was wrapped up in a napkin, and brought to Cæsar, and when he saw it, it is said he wept. But five years after, having engaged in war with Pompey's younger son, he caused his head also to be cut off, and set it up in a certain city, on the top of a lofty pole. The year following he was slain himself, and his nephew, Cæsar Augustus, after him became the *first emperor of the Romans*.

Thus we are to date the destruction of the thighs of brass, and the commencement of the legs of iron, from the year 65 b. c., when Pompey overthrew the kingdom of Syria. It is true, there is a slight difference of opinion among commentators on this subject; some fixing the epoch of this revolution in the image, in the year 63 b. c., when the same Pompey took the city of Jerusalem, which had refused to submit to his authority;

while others date it 33 years later, namely, in the year 30 b. c., when *Augustus Cæsar* destroyed the second *thigh of brass*, the Greek kingdom of Ptolemy in Egypt, and fully established his authority in Jerusalem.

You see the difference is not very great, and you observe also, that to determine the date of the entrance of each of the four monarchies into the image, we do not take the year in which they began to exist, for all four had been founded nearly 750 b. c.; but we take the year when they commenced their rule over the people of God, and overthrew the power of the empire which preceded them. Therefore, we commence the kingdom of Babylon in the year 605; that of Persia in 538; that of Greece in 330; that of the Romans in 65.

Hear, now, the principles by which we are enabled to determine with equal exactness, the geography of the four kingdoms.

These principles are four in number; but on account of your age, I will confine myself to two. These will be sufficient.

First principle. The special territory of each of these monarchies, is that which it occupied at the moment when, by the taking of Jerusalem, and the subjugation of the people of God, it became a part of the image. Hence, you see, its chronological date determines its geography. You will easily under-

stand this principle when you have seen its application in a few examples.

Were you asked what was the territory of the first, or Chaldean monarchy, what would be your answer? Nebuchadnezzar conquered Armenia, Asia, Persia, and subsequently the wealthy Egypt, Africa, and even, it is said, part of Spain; but why are we not to consider these countries as forming his peculiar territory?

Because his conquests, as we learn from the Bible, began with Jerusalem. From that moment he became the golden head of the image; his territory was determined; all the rest was extra.

Further: why does neither Egypt, nor Asia Minor, form a part of the peculiar territory of the breast of silver, or state of the Persians?

Because the people of God had already submitted to it, when it made the conquest of these countries.

Again; what was the territory of the Macedonians?

It included all Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. Alexander the Great had already conquered all these countries, when he became master of Jerusalem.

Lastly—let us pass to the fourth monarchy. What was the peculiar territory of the Romans, when they became members of the

image? It consisted of the countries which they had conquered before the year 65, or before the year 63, or the year 30, according as we date its commencement from one or other of these epochs.

So that as neither England, Holland, nor lower Germany, as yet made a part of the Roman state, we are not to include these countries in the *prophetic earth*. This latter must be circumscribed within the same boundaries as the kingdom of Augustus Cæsar. Now, we read in history, that on the accession of this prince to the imperial throne, the limits of the Roman state were, on the north, the Danube; on the east, the Rhine; on the west, the Atlantic; and on the south, Mount Atlas, in Africa. Therefore, it is obvious, we must not look for the ten kingdoms, represented by the ten toes of the image, beyond the limits which we have just mentioned.

Such is our first principle for determining the geography or peculiar territory of the four monarchies. I now proceed to the second, which you will find equally plain and intelligible.

As each of the four metals in the image indicates the dominion of a new race, and of a new language, we can easily ascertain the peculiar territory of each of the monarchies, by inquiring what was the language

which prevailed in it? Now, the Chaldean language was spoken between the Euphrates and Tigris, and towards the mouth of the former; the Persian to the west of the Tigris; Greek in all Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Macedonia, as far as the Danube and the mountains of Illyria; and lastly, Latin, in Europe, Africa to mount Atlas; in Europe, along the whole left bank of the Rhine, and all the right bank of the Danube, even to the Mediterranean sea and the ocean.

And even in the present day, not only are the French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish languages mere corruptions of the Latin, but further, all Roman Catholic worship in Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal, is performed in Latin; and when the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, as he is called, who rules over all those countries, publishes any letter or decree, it is always in the Latin language.

I proposed to myself three objects in beginning this lecture. 1. To bring the geography and chronology of the four monarchies into a satisfactory agreement, and to show you how they were to be determined.

2. To explain what was meant by the mixture of the iron with the potter's clay.

3. To show the meaning of that kingdom of the stone which is to break in pieces the image, and finally to fill the earth.

The first of these questions, however, has

occupied the whole of our time, so that we have not been able even to touch upon the other two. They are too important to be introduced into the end of a lecture, when probably your attention is already exhausted. I think it better, therefore, to reserve them, the Lord permitting, until next Sunday.

I do not regret, however, that we have dwelt so long upon this part of the subject, as I trust our explanations have shown you the minute details into which the Spirit of God has entered in these divine predictions.

May you, as we proceed in the study of this wonderful subject, feel your gratitude, your veneration for the Bible, your confidence in its declarations proportionably increase. May you often, while you open the holy and precious book, say to yourselves, Ah ! I hold in my hands the book of God, a wondrous book—a book which describes empires before they come into existence—a book in which the Almighty determines, ages before they exist, the bounds of their habitation, and says to them, as formerly to the sea, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here let thy proud waves be stayed ;” a book which opens, and no man shuts, which shuts, and no man opens, which bindeth and looseth, and hath the keys of the kingdom of heaven ! O precious book of God, may I honour thee, may I study thee, may I cherish thee more

and more every day! Hear the words of St. Paul, Heb. xii. 25: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

ELEVENTH LESSON.

DANIEL ii. 41—49.

I TRUST we shall be enabled, this day, to conclude our explanation of that prophetic image, on which were inscribed, 2443 years ago, the annals of nations which no longer exist—the destinies of empires yet to come, and the triumphs of that kingdom of Jesus, which shall, one day, cover the earth, and fill the church of God with a perfect holiness and an eternal joy. May we, in bringing our subject to its close, experience something of that holy awe and fervent adoration which the heathen king of Babylon felt, when casting himself at the feet of the prophet, he exclaimed : “Of a truth, it is, that your God is God of gods, and a Lord of kings.” May we learn to adore him with humble and grateful hearts, since to us it is given to see with our eyes, in history, what Nebuchadnezzar saw only by faith, in the interpretations of the prophet, and to look forward to that kingdom of God which shall never end.

We were at the fourth monarchy, and we have explained the 40th verse, in which it is said that there should arise, “a fourth king-

dom, strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things."

Two things now remain to be done ; First, to state what is the *potter's clay* which is mixed with the iron in the lower part of the image.

2. To explain the *fifth and last monarchy*, represented by the stone cut out of the mountain.

What is the *mountain* out of which the stone is cut ?

What is the *stone* which is cut out of that mountain without hands ?

What is signified by the *smiting and breaking in pieces* of the feet of the image composed of iron and clay ?

What is meant by the simultaneous destruction of the iron and clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, and of their becoming "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, which the wind carries away, and there is no place found for them ?"

And, lastly, what is meant by the growth of this stone, until it becomes a great mountain and *fills the whole earth*? ver. 35.— Read chap. ii. verses 33, 41, 43.

Let us carefully explain these verses.

We have seen that the Roman empire became incorporated in the image, 65 years b. c., when one of the thighs of brass, the Greek kingdom of Syria, together with Jerusalem, was subdued by Pompey ; or 35 years later,

when the second of the thighs of brass, the Greek kingdom of Egypt, was reduced to a Roman province, by the Emperor Augustus. The legs of iron then began, and the fourth kingdom, which was to exceed all the others, in rigour, power, extent, and duration, was established, and the western limits of the prophetic earth were fixed ; viz.—the Alps, the Danube, the Rhine, the North Sea, the Atlantic, and Mount Atlas.

Augustus Cæsar, the first Emperor of the Romans, was regarded as the master of the world, and a god on earth. His dominions extended upwards of 4000 miles in length, and more than 2000 in breadth. His revenue amounted to £4,000,000 a year. His formidable legions, each of which was equal to an army, were twenty-five in number. He was worshipped as a divinity ; temples were erected to him ; and priests were appointed in different places, to pay him homage. His government was peaceful, and was administered with wisdom and with vigour ; and to celebrate the glorious termination of his triumphs, and the undisturbed tranquillity which succeeded them, the temple of Janus, which was kept open in time of war, and shut in time of peace, was closed, for the third time, since the founding of the city, 750

B. C.

Now, this demi-god had reigned twenty-six years, when there occurred, in a remote

corner of the empire, an event which attracted comparatively little attention upon earth, but awakened the profoundest sympathy in the heaven of heavens.

In an obscure province of his states, and in one of the most inconsiderable towns of that province, there appeared a carpenter and his young wife, who had lately come down from the mountains ; the woman was great with child, and they were both very poor. They sought an asylum in the inn, the only one which the village afforded to the weary traveller ; but being informed that there was not room, they were obliged to take up their lodging in the stable. Here the young woman soon brought forth her first-born son, and having wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, she laid him in the manger for a cradle. The Emperor Augustus had ordered that the whole of his vast empire should be taxed ; and it was for the purpose of being enrolled in the public registry, that this poor couple came to the town of Bethlehem.

And who, at that time, cared for that child ? Who thought of his birth ? He had no form nor comeliness ; he was despised and rejected of men ; and they saw no beauty in him, that they should desire him ; he was despised and they esteemed him not.

The sun rose that morning as it had ever done before ; rivers continued their courses on earth, and the stars in heaven ; the aged

Emperor Augustus abode tranquilly in his palace ; little children, in the cities of his empire, thought only of their toys, men and women of their business or amusements ; and yet there was, at that moment, a thrilling sensation among the thrones, principalities, and powers of the heavenly world ; for the mystery of godliness, into which angels desire to look, was accomplishing ; God was manifested in the flesh ; and the multitude of the heavenly host, in celestial concert, sung, “ Glory, glory to God on high ! ” The King of Glory had just been born—the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, the Lord of lords, the Creator of heaven and earth, who upholdeth all things by the word of his power—the word which was in the beginning with God, and was God, our Saviour, our only and Almighty Saviour.

This event, being altogether religious, is not represented in the image. It took place when the legs had already become iron ; and you remember, I observed, that as the prophecies of the Bible refer, some to the history of empires and politics, others to the history of the church and religion ; the vision of the image, being sent to a heathen emperor, could reveal to us only the history of empires, and not the events of religion, except so far as they have an immediate and sensible influence on those of politics.

This Jesus, however, who was born in the

reign of *Augustus*, was put to death in that of his successor, Tiberius, at the time when Pontius Pilate governed Judea, in the room of the emperor. The third day he rose from the dead ; he ascended into heaven, and from thence sent down his Holy Spirit upon his apostles ; the elect were converted to the Lord ; the Christian church began amid persecution, affliction, and reproach ; it was persecuted for 300 years ; the blood of the faithful flowed like water ; they were covered with melted pitch and tied to stakes, and there burned as torches in the public places, or were thrown, for the amusement of the people, into the amphitheatre, to be devoured by lions and dogs. These persecutions, repeated on several occasions, lasted for nearly three centuries, and yet the Christians, who notwithstanding filled the towns, the country, and the Roman armies, never once rebelled against any of their emperors, or even “mixed with the revolutionists,” who abounded in those days.

At length, A. D. 312, one of the Roman emperors, perceiving that the Christians only increased throughout his empire, in proportion as they were persecuted with violence, openly proclaimed himself a Christian at the head of his armies.

This prince, who was called *Constantine*, was a great warrior. He does not seem to have been really anointed ; I mean to say,

that his life does not bespeak a man walking in the faith, in Christian love and holiness; but he was convinced of the truth of Christianity; he admired the character of Jesus Christ; he believed in his miracles, respected his martyrs, professed his doctrines, and even had a cross inscribed upon his banner with these remarkable words: "In this conquer." And, indeed, in a short time he had quite vanquished all his enemies.

But at this time a great change was introduced into the government and internal constitution of the empire. Constantine exempted the ministers of the Christian religion from the payment of taxes; he loaded them with riches and honours, and gave them palaces in the principal cities of his states; he established among them an ecclesiastical government, recognized in the empire and sanctioned by the laws, with its superior and inferior heads; and after Constantine, almost all the emperors continued or added to his work. The clergy, that is, the body of the ministers of religion, became a power which soon equalled that of the prince. The pastors of the cities governed those of the country, and the priests of the larger towns aspired to rule over those of the smaller ones. After some time, they even aimed at being independent of the princes who had recognized them; and subsequently pushing these haughty pretensions still further, they

set themselves above kings, and claimed the right of creating or deposing them at pleasure. The bishop of Rome proclaimed himself *bishop of bishops*, took the name of *Pontifex maximus*, a title completely pagan, and which the Roman emperors had hitherto borne for the celebration of idolatrous rites; he assumed the appellation of *Holy Father*, a name which the Lord Jesus Christ gives to the Almighty in his intercessory prayer; John xvii. 11; he had himself called *his holiness the vicegerent of Jesus Christ and of God on earth*; he wore on his head, alternately, a sacerdotal mitre and a royal tiara, and on the tiara the triple crown; he gave his foot to be kissed by bishops and kings, and caused two swords to be carried before him, intimating that he had a right to command, both in the church and in the state. “The spiritual sword,” said one of them in a famous bull, “ought to be wielded by the hand of the priest, the temporal sword by kings and soldiers, but by command and order of the priests.”

Such, my dear children, is the event represented by the mixture of iron and clay in the feet of the image. But let us examine more closely the words of Daniel, in verses 41—43, and we shall discover six distinct characteristics in the change here intimated. They are as follows:—

1. The empire or government was to be

divided, ver. 41. So literally has this been accomplished, that the historians of the Latin empire, and even the priests themselves, have frequently called the church "*Imperium in imperio,*" "an empire within an empire." Daniel had said, "the kingdom shall be divided."

2. This division was not to be external, like that of the toes, but internal, like the mixture of iron and clay in the image; it was to exist both in the feet and in the toes; it was to take place in the very essence of the constitution. And this is what has actually occurred in all the states of the western empire, in Italy, Austria, Bavaria, France, Piedmont, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal.

3. This change was to take place before the division of the empire into ten kingdoms, inasmuch as it began in the upper part of the feet, and descended to the toes. This, likewise, was accomplished. The arrival of the Gothic nations dates about the year 400; Rome itself fell into their hands in 476, while the change of which we speak began 80 years before, A. D. 312.

"And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken," ver. 42.

Here, again, the prophecy has been amply verified by the event. Did time permit, we might easily bring forward a thousand examples, from the history of twelve centuries-

in proof of this. Yea, we might derive our illustrations of it from the more recent empire of Napoleon, or from the present difficulties of the kings of Prussia, Holland, and France.

When any prince falls under the displeasure of the priests, they refuse to appoint new ministers of religion; the country is put under an interdict—the religious fears of the people are excited—ceremonies are interrupted—processions and funeral rites are suspended—the church bells are silenced—the lights extinguished—holy water, incense, holy oil, all those material aids, those mischievous and lying remedies which the people look for from the priest, are withheld; thus the conscience of the Catholic is roused against that of the citizen, he is even released from his oath, and incited to rebellion. More than once have we seen the church arming the son of a king against his own father! In such cases of mutual hostility, what is the prince who is dissatisfied with this state of things to do? He must either forcibly interfere in the affairs of the church, or, while he acknowledges that “there is an abuse,” quietly succumb to the clergy, and leave them in the enjoyment of their dangerous power.

“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.”

When the emperor Constantine, who, how-

ever, appointed and revoked bishops at pleasure, assembled councils, and presided over them, controlled their decrees, and published them as laws, when he constituted the clergy as a separate body in the state, and endowed them with privileges and immunities, little did he think that he was creating an empire within an empire, a kingdom within a kingdom, mixing clay with the iron, and that this new kingdom would soon have its capital, its provinces, its provincial governors, its tributes, and its tributaries.

Yet, such has been the origin of that unnatural union of church and state, government and clergy, religion and politics, which for 1800 years has continued to corrupt the church and weaken the state—has operated as an intoxicating potion on the priests; and has been felt by the princes as a fatal and perpetual nightmare, in struggling against which they have exhausted their strength, their energies, and their wisdom; for, through more than twelve centuries, they have sought from their wisest politicians a remedy for so formidable an evil, and they have not found it. As we see children return continually to a crafty old man, to witness the repetition of the same trick by which they are imposed upon, so have we seen them, from age to age, apply to the clergy, older and more cunning than all their wise politicians, to receive the same promises, the same disappointments,

the same answers, and the same refusals.—“The kingdom shall be partly weak, and partly broken.”

5. “And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with, or by, the seed of men,” ver. 43.

This, too, has been exactly accomplished. These two powers of the Latin empire have been drawn from the same families. Of the sons of the same father, the one has occupied the imperial or regal, the other the papal throne; the one has been in the army, the other in a convent; the one a magistrate, the other a priest; the one a military leader, the other an archbishop. In no other instance has such a state of things been found to exist. In other cases, where the priesthood have acquired a power in the state, and brought it under their dominion, it has been a married clergy that has effected this; a body of priests of the same race, recruiting their ranks from among themselves, marrying only among their own caste, and bringing up children, from the cradle, in and for the same profession. But in the states of the Latin empire, it has been quite otherwise; and I shall presently quote one or two passages from a modern historian, which will illustrate what I have to say on the subject.

6. “They shall mingle themselves by the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one

to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay," ver. 43, latter part.

We have, here, another circumstance, which has been wonderfully realized in all the countries of the Roman empire. The church and state, though *mingled by the seed of men*, have never been able, cordially, to unite with one another. In other countries, either the priests governed the state, or the state the priests; but in the Roman empire, while the priests received a constitutional power, while they were upheld by the temporal sword of the prince, and by a universal law in all Europe, obtained the possession of tithes, the distinctness of church and state has everywhere, and at all times, been maintained. They have been separate without being separate; associated without being associated; united without being united; dependent, and yet independent.

I read a few days ago, in a newspaper, calling itself Roman Catholic, the two following sentences, which it proposed as the motto of its party: "Catholicism, the religion of the state."—"Sacerdotal independence."

That is, said I, dependence and independence, iron and potter's clay, union and disunion! perpetual, sickly inconsistency, which must ever issue in the oppression of the church by the state, or of the state by the church! fatal and incurable contradiction, from which in vain will you hope to escape,

till the knowledge of the Lord fill the earth,
as the waters cover the sea.

But not to prolong these explanations, and to show you, by the testimony of an unbiassed person, that these particulars of the prophecy have been as divinely fulfilled as the others, I will quote for you two passages, which lately struck me very much in reading the works of a distinguished French author, I mean M. Guizot, the minister of the king of France, a man of considerable erudition and talent, and who has latterly devoted himself, with great success, to the study of history.

In his course of modern history, (tenth lesson,) I find the following passage, which seems to bear strongly on the words of the prophet: “They shall mingle themselves by the seed of men.”

“In every case where the clergy have got society into their power, and subjected it to a theocratic organization, this transformation has been effected by a married clergy, a body of priests, filling up their ranks from among themselves, educating their children from the cradle in and for the same profession. Consult history—look at Asia or Egypt, and you will see that all the great theocracies were the work of a clergy, who formed a complete society of themselves, were all-sufficient in themselves, and borrowed nothing from without.

“By the celibacy of the priests, the Chris-

tian clergy were placed in a totally different predicament ; they were obliged, in order to perpetuate themselves, to have recourse continually to a lay society, and to seek among all ranks, situations, and social professions, the means of their own perpetuity.

“In vain did an *esprit du corps* labour to assimilate these heterogeneous elements ; something of their origin always remained in the new recruits ; gentlemen and citizens, they retained some traces of their ancient spirit, and of their previous condition. No doubt celibacy, by creating for the clergy a position altogether singular, and foreign to all the common interests of human life, was a great cause of their isolated position ; but it also obliged them continually to re-connect themselves with lay society, for the purpose of filling up their ranks, and recruiting their forces therefrom.....I do not hesitate to say, that this necessity has done much more to hinder the theocratic organization aimed at, than the *esprit du corps*, supported by celibacy, has done to promote it.”

My second quotation, which bears upon the words, “they shall mingle themselves by the seed of men ; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay ;” is taken from a discourse on “Liberty of Worship,” delivered by the same learned man before the “Society of Christian Morality:”—it is as follows :

“ In every nation of antiquity whose history I consult, I find but one or other of these systems, as it regards the connexion of religion with the state : either the clergy were, at the same time, invested with the sovereignty, and exercised a temporal power, in virtue of their spiritual supremacy ; or the temporal sovereign, whether a man, or a body of men, was clothed with religious offices as with civil magistracies, and governed alike the priests and the people. Egypt was under the dominion of the priesthood ; at Rome the patricians were also pontiffs ; in the former, the theocracy prevailed ; in the latter, religion was subordinate ; but in all cases, the spiritual and temporal powers were confounded, and placed in the same hands.

“ The destiny of modern Europe has been different ; where, from the ruins of the Roman empire, the existing nations began to arise, two societies, the only real, the only living ones were found in presence of one another ; on the one hand, the conquering barbarians, on the other, the Christian clergy. Different in their nature, origin, race, and language, these two societies were yet constrained to live together, for they both had in themselves the means of self-defence and self-subsistence. They approximated ; they formed alliances, but they never became confounded. The barbarians became Christians ; the Christian clergy took their place in the aristocracy of

the barbarians; but the two castes, the two societies, as we may call them, continued essentially distinct; they had each their offices, their organization, their laws, their jurisdictions, their militias, their sovereigns.” “Whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. The kingdom shall be divided. It shall be partly strong, and partly broken.”

But time advances; and I am anxious to conclude this second chapter to-day. I shall therefore hasten to consider, in the last place, the kingdom of the stone and of the mountain. We have hitherto been speaking of the past, it now remains for us to speak of the future. That past has included, since the days of Daniel, 2443 years. When this future shall commence is another question. What it shall be, however, prophecy enables us to know and to declare, and this is a great deal.

“In the days of these kings, (represented in the image by the toes,) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever,” ver. 40.

Now this fifth kingdom is spoken of throughout the whole scriptures.

In chapter vii. Daniel, after describing exactly the four great monarchies, under the form of four beasts, speaks of it again. See 17.

This fifth kingdom then is that of *the most High, that of Jesus Christ, that of the people of God*, that which is promised to the church when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Compare Luke i. 31—33.

The mountain of which we read, ver. 45, is the church of God, which has existed in all ages, along with the image, and before the image; but it is only then that it shall obtain dominion among men.

And the stone “cut out of the mountain without hands,” is some feeble and insignificant portion of the Christian church, which shall become the occasion of the overthrow of the image, and of the enemy of the Redeemer’s kingdom. And how shall this be effected?

1. It shall begin *without hands*, that is, without the will of men being directly employed in it, or having any ground for glorying therein. All shall be obliged to acknowledge in it the finger of God, and the power of his grace alone.

2. It shall begin *in the toes of the image*, that is, in one of the principal kingdoms of the western empire; either in Italy, or in Austria, or in Spain, or perhaps in Algiers;

but not in England, nor in Holland, nor in Prussia, neither in Russia, nor among the Turks.

3. It shall begin after this manner : “ The stone shall smite the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and break them in pieces.”

True Christians will never rise up against *the powers that be* : they will ever *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*, as, *unto God, the things that are God's* ; but if any miserable child of man presume to rise up against the Church of Jesus Christ, he shall sooner or later be defeated ; and if he seek to destroy it, he shall surely be destroyed of it himself, just as if, in a fit of rage, I were to rush with my head against that stone pillar to remove it from its place, or throw it down ; it is it that would crush my head to atoms, and the fault would be my own folly alone.

Thus, in the last day, shall the church break its adversaries in pieces. “ It shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb,” it shall overcome by “ the faith and patience of the saints.”

4. Lastly, we here see what shall be the result of this collision. One of the kings belonging to the Latin church, one of the powers of the west, incensed against some portion of the people of God, shall seek to destroy them, but he shall be ground to powder, “ like the chaff of the summer's threshing-floor, which

the wind scattereth away.” On this occasion, first “the iron and clay,” (that is, both the civil and ecclesiastical power,) shall be broken ; and then the brass, the silver, and the gold, (that is, the powers which shall then be reigning, whether in the territory of the eastern empire, in Persia or in Chaldea;) and “there shall be no place for them.” There shall be no more metal, no more union, no more strength or cohesion in human powers. In former revolutions, one metal succeeded another; but in this there shall be nothing but dust, nothing but the most frightful anarchy. This complete and universal breaking up of all existing governments shall begin in the toes, and extend to the rest of the image. Disorder, terror, ruin, shall overspread the whole earth; unheard of anarchy, indescribable distress, shall seize upon all nations, which shall seem as in the agonies of dissolution. But in the midst of this universal, this frightful perplexity, this little stone shall grow, grow, grow by the power of the Most High God. Then it shall become a great mountain—and, finally, shall fill the whole earth. Yes, O Church of my Saviour, thou shalt fill the whole earth !

Then shall the kingdoms of the world be given to the Son of God for his inheritance, and his dominion shall be glorious; none shall hinder, none shall disturb, none shall restrain it. Then shall it be said, “The

kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.” Revelations xi. 12. Read chap. v. 44, 45.

“ Then the king, Nebuchadnezzar, fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon ; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king,” verses 46—49.

Let us also, in heart, prostrate ourselves before the God of gods, and King of kings. Let us bow in faith and love before him, unto whom every knee shall be compelled to bend in heaven and on earth ! Let us say with that happy man who died, looking to his cross, “ Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom !” Lord Jesus, may I be found clothed, when thou comest, with the robe of thy righteousness, washed, pure and spotless, in thy blood !

“ Now, unto Him that is able to keep us

from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen." Jude 24, 25.

T W E L F T H L E S S O N .

DANIEL iii. 1—15.

(IN the absence of the ordinary minister, this lecture was given by the Rev. Mr. B—.)

The narrative which we are about to enter upon this day, will lead us out of the line of prophecy. The course of our lessons calls our attention to other subjects.

“Nebuchadnezzar, the king, made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits.”

This gigantic image was probably composed of plates of gold, rather than of solid metal. It was sixty cubits, that is, one hundred feet high, the cubit of the Chaldeans being equal to twenty inches. This is about the height of the tower of our cathedral, and yet you need not wonder at these enormous dimensions, as they are not greater than those of the immense bronze statue, which the Italians have erected in the vicinity of their beautiful Lago Maggiore, in honour of an ecclesiastic, named Carlo Borromeo. This person was an ancient bishop of Milan, who is worshipped with great devotion by all the Roman Catholics in the north of Italy, and whose body is shown in the cathedral of

Milan, in a coffin of rock crystal. The statue to which I allude is sixty-four feet in height, and rests upon a pedestal thirty-six feet high. At a distance, it looks like a church steeple, and it is said that five persons can conveniently dine in the inside of its head. The idol which Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plain of Dura must likewise have stood on a lofty pedestal; for the proportions of its height and breadth are not those of the human body. Supposing the breadth of the shoulders to have been six cubits, the elevation of the statue itself ought not to have been more than twenty-four; for it is computed that the total height of a well-proportioned man is eight times, and the breadth of his shoulders at least twice that of his head. The pedestal of the idol of Dura would therefore have been at least thirty-six cubits high.

You will wonder at this instance of idolatrous pride on the part of Nebuchadnezzar. What! you will say, is not this the man who so lately was a witness and an admirer of an astonishing miracle? Is it not he who cast himself at the feet of the prophet, and exclaimed, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets." But now, behold, he erects an idol, and requires all his people to worship it! We do not, it is true, know the precise epoch of this sad event; but it is too certain that it was subsequent to the period

of the miraculous dream, as we read of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being already “set over the affairs of Babylon,” ver. 12.

Some persons have supposed that the gigantic image set up in the plain of Dura was only a representation of that which Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream; and that he ignorantly designed it as a homage to the God of gods, whose revelations he had received by the mouth of Daniel. But from the sequel of this history, and from what is related, chapter vii. 4—6, it is much more probable that Nebuchadnezzar was induced to erect this image by the persuasions of the great men of Babylon, who hoped thereby to compromise the companions of Daniel, and to destroy their credit with the king. Indeed, it may be asked, why this threat of a burning fiery furnace, unless it was directed against the Hebrews? Was there any necessity for placing before the eyes of the idolatrous Chaldeans the instruments of a horrible death, to induce them to worship a new idol?

However this may be, dear children, you see here another proof of the hardness, and of the vain and wicked folly of the heart of man. But, before we go further, there is one reflection which I desire to make to you. We come to this place to study the Bible, but not to acquire a vain knowledge which puffeth

up and flatters pride. This, however, is what unfortunately too often happens. Look at Nebuchadnezzar; like us, he had just been learning the prophecies, and that from the lips of Daniel himself; and yet what does he do? he sets up an idol. You, in like manner, come to study the prophecies in the book of this same Daniel; beware, therefore, that you also become not idolaters. The Bible was given to sanctify you; and any study of it which has not the effect of rendering you more sincere, more pure, more humble, more obedient, more meek, is nothing, yea, worse than nothing; it is even injurious, culpable, and will only serve to condemn you.

The word of God was intended to be a nourishment to our souls. Now no substance can afford nourishment, unless it become chyle, blood, flesh, veins, muscles, and bones, in those who receive it. So, in like manner, to afford us spiritual nourishment, the word of God must cause Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith. Hence it will avail us little to come here to meditate upon the folly of Nebuchadnezzar, as others have coldly done on the denial of Peter, and the sin of Magdalene, unless we learn to look inward, and to ask ourselves, how have we profited by what we have heard? In a time of religious awakening, like the present, some children may make it a motive of pride, that they are better acquainted with their Bibles than their

fathers ; doubtless this knowledge is an inestimable treasure ; but to *know* without *possessing*, to *learn* without *profiting*, is vanity of vanities, misery of miseries.

But let us return to Nebuchadnezzar. We said, how infatuated, how ungrateful, after so many wonders performed in his presence ! But let us take care that we be not all like Nebuchadnezzar. We also have seen great things. Many of you, no doubt, have learned by experience, that God heareth prayer. But after this happy experience, have you not returned a thousand times to your sins, your follies, and your idolatries ? There are many ways in which we may worship false gods ; and it is by no means necessary that we should bow down before them. Whenever the heart follows with a decided preference, and with eagerness, after any object but God, whatever be the name by which that object is called, it is idolatry ; and this disorder of the affections soon leads from sin to sin. Let us then examine ourselves, and see whether, while we accuse Nebuchadnezzar, we may not have much more reason to condemn ourselves ; whether we have not to fight against some passion, which leads us to prefer certain objects to God, and to give them the place of God in our hearts ! For these are our idols ; these are our false gods.

“ Then Nebuchadnezzar, the king, sent to gather together the princes, the governors,

the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had made,” ver. 2.

The word *dedication* is applied to any festival celebrated for the purpose of presenting some sacred object as an offering to God ; or in general, of solemnizing the day on which some institution has been established, or some monument founded or completed. Thus, for example, when a Christian enters a new house, he will say,—This is an important day in my life—I have taken one step more in my journey ! What trials, what vicissitudes await me here, I know not ! Here, perhaps, I shall surrender up my last breath ! Here I shall have sorrow and joy, calls of grace and visits of mercy. Ah ! may this house be *dedicated* to the Lord ! In the same way we may dedicate everything. And you remember, perhaps, what took place at the opening of this chapel not many years since ; how we implored God that it might never be employed for any other purpose but his glory, the salvation of souls, and the preaching of his truth. This was its dedication.

Now Nebuchadnezzar, as we have said, being desirous to celebrate the dedication of his image, assembled all the principal estates of his empire ; and issued a command, that

at what time they should hear the sound of various kinds of music, all should fall down and worship the image which he had set up, on pain of being cast into a burning fiery furnace.

Such were the trials to which the people of God in Babylon were at that time exposed. Thousands of Hebrews had been brought thither by Nebuchadnezzar; and this was their hour of conflict with Satan, the world, and its pomps. No sooner, therefore, do the people, nations, and languages, throughout the vast empire, hear the appointed signal, the clashing of the cymbals, the clangor of the trumpet, the sound of the harp, the flute, the dulcimer, and all kinds of music, than they fall down before the golden image; but the faithful among the Jews refuse to obey, and immediately are accused before the king.

The monarchs of the East are exceedingly haughty; none are allowed to look at them, much less to disobey them! It is told to the king of Babylon that three of the Jews, disputing his command, have refused to do homage to his idol.

You know who these three happy martyrs were; they were the three friends of Daniel. But perhaps you wonder that only three are mentioned, and that the prophet Daniel is not among the number. We are not told the reason of this; it is possible he may have been absent from Babylon at the time: c t,

not, though faithful like the other three, he may have owed his safety to the fear which his reputation inspired. The enemies of the people of God would not venture to attack a man so high in the favour of the sovereign, and therefore they resolved to try first what they could do with less noble victims.

However this may be, the recusants are denounced to the king, and he cannot avoid punishing them. Next Sunday you will see their admirable firmness, even in the midst of the fiery furnace ; for the present we must confine our observations to the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar. “Who is that God,” he presumes to say, “who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

My dear children, we shall terminate where we began. You see here the presumptuous arrogance and the infatuated vanity of the heart of man ; you see the frantic pride of this worm of the earth, who demands : “Who is that God that shall deliver you ?” He lives, he moves, he exists in God, he cannot breathe a single breath without him ; God has but to cut a single thread, and he will sink into that nothing out of which he was created, and yet he demands, “Who is that God that can deliver you out of my hand ?” But, my dear children, let us watch over ourselves, and let us remember that God is, indeed, able to deliver. Ah ! were you commanded to fall down and worship idol gods,

or to adore images, or saints, or the mass, and threatened, in case of disobedience, with the horrors of a burning fiery furnace, you would then have need to remember that God is able to deliver. But alas ! how often, on the contrary, when you have seen before you some danger to be encountered, some obstacle to be surmounted, some sacrifice to be made, have you thought deliverance impossible ! and how often has this unbelief entailed upon you much evil ! Often has conscience whispered to you : “ True, duty would lead me to act in a different manner from what I do ; but then I should lay myself open to the reproaches of my friends, and afford them an occasion to speak against me : they would misunderstand me ; they would forsake, perhaps persecute me ; perhaps it is better for me to make some concessions, than to attempt to brave so many difficulties.” Thus you remembered not that God was able to deliver you even from a burning fiery furnace.

Ah ! be faithful to your master, love him, seek his will, his whole will, and nothing but his will ; yield not a hair’s breadth ; there is but one rule for you to follow, and it is this : “ Go on, come what may ;” God is able to deliver you, though your enemies were to heat against you all the furnaces in the world. Ah ! fear rather the furnaces of hell, and the fire which is never quenched.

But when you leave this place, what are

you called upon to do? "Oh! take heed to yourselves: blessed are they that hear the word of God and do it!" See that there is not anything in your character, your conduct, or your habits of life, which is contrary to the will of God; and if hitherto it has been so, look no longer to the judgment of men: it is wiser to obey God. No doubt young persons may be placed in difficult, delicate, and painful situations. They are called upon to pay much deference to the counsel of their ministers, their parents, or their superiors; they are required to be meek and lowly of heart; to abhor everything like disrespect and impertinence; but should it so happen that others should seek to draw you into what is evidently wrong, and that faithfulness on your part should expose you to many sufferings, ah! then remember the God of Daniel; remember that God is able to deliver!

THIRTEENTH LESSON.

DANIEL iii. 16-25.

WE have already come to the close of the first of these important predictions, which we find recorded in the book of the prophet Daniel ; and we have seen that it announces to the world revolutions not yet consummated, and others whose accomplishment has not yet commenced. We now proceed to direct our attention to other subjects of contemplation. Four long chapters, from the third to the sixth, have intervened without any prophetic history ; and, consequently, for several weeks other objects of study and of admiration shall occupy our meditations. But if we are permitted to proceed together, as far as the seventh chapter, we shall again have occasion to return to the four monarchies, and frequently to carry forward our thoughts to the happy universal reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. We shall find our recollections of the image very useful in affording us a key to these new oracles of God ; and I hope that none of you, my dear children, will have forgotten them.

But let us now return to Babylon.

A horrible auto-da-fé was celebrating in

that city. The king, Nebuchadnezzar, had commanded the three young Hebrews who refused to worship his idol to be cast alive into the burning fiery furnace. I say an auto-da-fé, which means, in Spanish, an act of faith. This is the name which was given to scenes not less cruel, nor attended with less solemnity, which took place 200 years ago, in various cities of Italy, France, Germany, and especially Spain; when, in the name of what is called *the Holy Father*, that is, the Pope, and of the *holy* inquisition, which is a tribunal of priests, hundreds of men and women, not less pious, nor less excellent, nor less faithful, than Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were burned alive in the public market-places.

I happened to open, a few days ago, the history of the reformation in Spain, and of the martyrs of that country; and among other accounts, I fell upon that of 800 persons of the Protestant church of Seville, who were imprisoned, at one time, by order of the inquisition in that wicked and unfortunate city. I could not help being struck by the resemblance. The pompous solemnities with which the Hebrew youths were burned 3000 years ago, before the court of Babylon, were the image, only less magnificent, of those with which Protestants were burned before the court of Spain, in the market-place of Del Campo, near Valladolid, or on the scaf-

folds of Seville ; the ceremonies the same, the tortures the same, the punishment the same, and for the same cause.

When the priests of the inquisition discovered that any individual had read the Bible in the vulgar tongue, or had refused, from conscience, to worship St. James of Compostello, or the Virgin Mary, or the bones of the saints, or their pictures, or graven images, immediately they made preparations for his execution in the public market-square, or before the gate of the city, during Easter week. The means of destruction were, as I have already said, the same, *the fire*. The cause was the same, refusing to worship any but the true and living God. The pageantry was the same ; the king of Spain was there with his queen, and all his court ; even here the king of Babylon, with his princes, his governors, and captains, his counsellors, and all the estates of his kingdom, were present to witness the burning of the three Hebrew youths. The Friday after Easter they all assembled together, and the next day they marched in solemn procession in the following order. First, there were the children of the schools, headed by the ecclesiastics, singing hymns ; next came the prisoners condemned to the stake, each supported by two monks, one on either side ; their hands were tied across their breasts ; they wore long yellow linen dresses, with figures of devils

painted on them ; their heads were covered with a tiara, or cap of pasteboard, which was likewise ornamented with painted demons and flames of fire ; gags of iron and wood, called *mordazas*, were thrust into their mouths, to make them appear more hideous to the people, by distending their jaws in a horrible manner, and to prevent their giving expression, as they went along, to the glowing hopes which animated their breasts, and to the affectionate appeals which their charity might have dictated. They were followed, first, by the senators of the city, the alguazils, and judges, and after these, by the lieutenant of the king, and the nobles on horseback. Next came all the members of the clergy, the bishop and his vicars-general, the priests and the monks ; and lastly, to conclude the pageant, the kings of the ceremony, the members of the inquisition, leaving a large empty space between them and the rest of the assembly, and preceded by an immense banner of scarlet damask, with the portrait of the Pope, and his coat of arms embroidered on it, borne by the fiscal attorney.

One of the accounts which I read was that of four ladies of high birth, in 1559. Isabella de Vaenia, Maria de Viroes, the young, pious, and noble Maria de Bohorches, with her young sister, Cornelia. Twenty years of age, deeply versed in the holy scrip-

tures, and full of faith and of prayer, this young woman went to the stake, before the gate of Seville, with the same courage as the three young Hebrews, and in the same cause; her hands bound before her, wearing the yellow linen dress, and the tiara on her head, in the cause of her Saviour. “Her countenance,” say the historians, “was so joyous as she was going to death, and she sung in so loud and clear a strain, that the tribunal immediately ordered the cruel *mordaza* to be put into her mouth, as in the case of these men ; but she died in the joy of the Holy Spirit.”

And such, 3000 years before, had been the martyrdom of the three noble young Hebrews in the vicinity of Babylon.

But contemplate, my friends, this wondrous scene, this sublime and touching spectacle on the plain of Dura ! Can you imagine the thrilling sensations of such a day ! The multitude had seen these three young men, all distinguished for their birth, their education, their noble blood—they were three governors of provinces—led forth to death. An immense concourse had assembled on the vast plain ; all the powers of Babylon surrounded the terrible Nebuchadnezzar, seated on his throne ; the princes, the governors, the captains, the counsellors of the king. These three pious and heroic youths were thrown, bound like Maria de Bohor-

ches, but without *mordazas*, into the horrible fiery furnace. Doubtless they were calm, like that young Christian, and full of a spirit of prayer. It was expected, however, that they would give utterance to some first cries of suffering and of anguish. But, no ! See ! what has happened ? The king of Babylon, heretofore so enraged, arises ; he is in amazement ; he approaches ; he is troubled ; he is affrighted. What is the matter, and what can he have seen in the fiery furnace ? There are no longer only three men in it ; there are four ! They are no longer bound ; they are without bonds ! They walk about in the fire as one would do in the chambers of a palace, or in the pavilions of a sanctuary ! "What !" exclaims he, "did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire ?" They answered, "True, O king."

Then said he, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt ; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God !"

Thus, my friends, were these three young believers, who put their confidence in God, delivered out of the fire. Judge what must have been the amazement of the princes and captains, the governors and officers of the king, when they beheld them.

They expected never more to hear of them in this world, and behold they come out of

the fire with countenance serene, with expression sublime, radiant with gratitude, and beaming with peace ; not a hair of their heads was injured ; the smell of fire had not passed upon them ; one thing only was burned. And what was that ? Their bonds ; yes, their bonds ! They feared not the king's word ; they gave up their bodies ; they put their trust in the Lord, and the Lord delivered them. Behold them ! glory to God ! yea, glory to God ! Praise the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever !

But I proceed to consider the more immediate subject of our meditations this day, which is the answer of the three young Hebrews to the king of Babylon, when they saw themselves placed between the fury of his look and the burning heat of the fiery furnace.

When Nebuchadnezzar was told that the three Hebrew governors whom he had set over the provinces of Babylon, had refused to pay him the required homage, filled with fury, he forgot all the lessons which he had learned from Daniel ; the form of his visage was changed ; he was no longer able to restrain himself ; and immediately summoning before his throne the three offenders, he said unto them, " Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up ? If ye fall down and worship the image

which I have made, well ; but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace ; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands ? ” ver. 14, 15.

Now hear their admirable answer ; and mark the dignity, the calmness, the faith which it breathes.

But observe, first, that notwithstanding their courage and the injustice of the king, there is nothing of bitterness or disrespect in their reply ; they do not exclaim against the injustice of their treatment ; they do not make a great noise ; in this respect they are not like enthusiasts ; they speak without pride, without passion, they address their monarch with respect ; they know that they ought to honour authorities, even when unhappily they are obliged to disobey them. Thus we find the apostle Paul addressing the Roman governor, Festus, with the title of “ Most noble,” at the very moment when the latter had cried to him from his judgment-seat, “ Paul, thou art beside thyself ; much learning doth make thee mad.” — “ I am not mad,” said he, “ most noble Festus ; I speak the words of truth and soberness.”

But again, in addition to this respectfulness, notice also the firmness, faith, and dignity of their language. They had read in the word of God, “ Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image ; thou shalt not bow

down to them, nor worship them ;” they had read that command, and they resolved to abide by it. They chose to die rather than sin. They feared that King who has power to cast into hell more than the king of Babylon ; they feared the fire of hell more than the fire of the burning furnace. Imagine to yourselves these three young men in presence of the princes, the governors, the captains, and the counsellors of the empire, and of the assembled thousands in the plain of Dura ; in presence of the incensed king, with the burning fiery furnace, into which they were presently to be cast, full in their view ; and then hear their reply, and you will be convinced that they were enabled to look higher than this earth, and as St. Paul says, “to see” by faith “him that is invisible,” Heb. xi. 25—27.

“ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace ; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king ! But if not, be it known unto thee, O king ! that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Ah ! they had been threatened with death ; it was already prepared for them ; it was terrible ; but they knew in whom they be-

lieved, and they could say, "I am ready." They had learned when they were young that sixteenth Psalm, which has been a comfort to many a dying Christian; for that Psalm was in their Bible, as well as in ours; and from the earliest times, all the Israelites were accustomed to learn the Psalms by heart. "Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god; their drink offerings of blood will not I offer, nor take up their names into my lips. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup—thou maintainest my lot. I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is on my right hand, I shall not be moved." But let us hear attentively their answer. There are three things in it which deserve our notice.

1. They do not hesitate a moment in giving it. "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter." This expression, however, is not clear, and is capable of being interpreted, as having something disrespectful in it. The duty of these young men evidently was to answer the king; and it would have been exceedingly improper if they had refused to do so; and accordingly we see that in point of fact they did answer him. The phrase may, with more propriety and correctness, be rendered: "We are not at a loss to

answer thee, we have not to search what answer we shall give thee, O king ! our answer is ready ; our God hath spoken, and consequently, we have but one way to take."

Such, my friends, is one feature in the answer of these three young Hebrews, which I would point out, and which I would recommend to you for your imitation. When temptation comes in our way, we ought not to do like Balaam, who, after having said : "If Balak would give me his house full of gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord," yet soon after added : "Tarry ye here also, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more ;" for thus it was that this unhappy man fell into the snare of the devil.—We must say to sin : Get thee behind me Satan !—We must flee from it, and as we flee, exclaim like Joseph : "How shall I do this great evil, and sin against God ?"

2. But in the second place, notice the openness and faithful decision of their answer. They seek no excuses nor pretexts.—No ! when obedience to God is in question, we must be fearless and straight-forward, both in our language and in our conduct.—Hear how they express themselves : He whom we serve is God, he is our God ; "be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

3. But notice in the third place, their confidence in God. "Our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace," and even though he were not to prevent our being cast into it, yet we know that in some way or other "he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king!"

4. Lastly, notice their resolution, so simple, and at the same time so holy and so magnanimous. Whatever our God is pleased to do with us, our path is plain ; he hath taught us what we have to do. To deliver is his ; we have nothing to do with that ; he will manage it as he sees fit ; but to obey is ours ; and this also is our security, our happiness, and our glory ; and through his grace, we will be faithful in it !

But now, dear children, suppose that instead of thus answering before the king, and all the assembly of Babylon, these young believers had demanded time to consider, and had asked the advice of their friends—what counsels, think you, would they, in all probability, have received ? I will tell you ; for I have known analogous cases and temptations of a similar kind. I think I hear them : "Dear friends, dear Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, have you well considered what you are going to do ? you are going to give up your situations and a post in which you do so much good ! Is it not evident that you are in your place in the

magistracy of Babylon? Undoubtedly; for who could have thought, humanly speaking, that you should ever have been called to it? It was evidently God himself that put you into it by his Almighty interposition, when he endowed Daniel with miraculous wisdom, and established him at the gate of the king. And what will become of your poor countrymen, if you are taken away from us by a public execution? Unhappy children of exile, they will be oppressed by the Chaldeans; and you become the cause of all this misery to them, because you will incense the king, and the whole nation, more and more against them. They will persecute them, they will deprive them of the liberty of serving God, they will cruelly oppress them, and you shall be the cause. O think, dear friends, how promisingly things have been going on for some time back! there have been instances of conversion; the princes and nobles have begun to favour us; even Nebuchadnezzar is making progress; he has received some convictions; he is improving daily. Think what it would be if that man were to give himself to God! And after all, dear brethren, what is it that is required of you? A mere momentary compliance; you are not called upon to make any abjuration; it is a matter of discipline, and not of doctrine; you are allowed full liberty of conscience. What harm will it do, if you bow down like all the

rest, and like the Jews at Jerusalem, who have even sent deputies to Babylon ! You are not prevented to think as you like ; you may abhor idolatry in your hearts ; you may even openly express your hatred of it elsewhere. Every body knows that you are forced ; that you are captives, slaves, and strangers ! And besides all this, Nebuchadnezzar is your benefactor, and you must not forget his kindness.....”

“ Get thee behind me, get thee behind me Satan !”—“ Get thee behind me, Simon, thou son of Jonas, thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men, and by thy carnal tenderness, thou art an occasion of fall unto me.” Life eternal, life eternal ! Obedience, obedience ! “ Whosoever shall be ashamed of Jesus and of his words, of him will he be ashamed when he comes in his glory, and in the glory of his Father and of his holy angels ! ” Luke ix. 26. But blessed be God, my brethren, blessed be God, the three young Hebrew believers sought other counsels, hearkened to another prudence, and followed another policy ; the prudence of the saints, the counsels of the Holy Spirit, the policy of heaven ! Yes, they looked up to the Almighty ; they counted it their portion to keep his word ; they submitted themselves with an honest and sincere heart ; and God soon glorified himself in the simplicity of their obedience.

Here, my dear children, there is a solemn lesson for you ; I would urge it on your careful and serious consideration for the rest of your earthly course. Yes, you should ever, and under all circumstances, hold as an infernal device of the old serpent, and as an emanation from hell, the wicked and lying suggestion, that you may continue in disobedience, in order to retain the means and opportunity of doing good to your families, your country, or the church of God. Ah ! it is an imagination full of pride ; it is a presumption full of folly ! Poor miserable creature ! do good without God ! Wretched sinner, brand plucked from the burning ! "if the righteous hardly be saved," and if thou canst have nothing that thou hast not received, thinkest thou to do good under the government of God, in refusing to do what is good ? Do the will and the power to do it come from thee ? Hast thou the heart in thy hand ? "Good !" sayest thou, "but who except God can do good either in thee or in others; either by thee or by others?" Begin by obeying, and then thou shalt see what he, "of whom, and by whom, and through whom, are all things," will be pleased to do with thee ; then if it be his will, he will bless thy humble submission and thy walk of faith. I know, indeed, that he can, if he see fit, bring good out of thy negligence and thy rebellions, as he did out of the hypocrisy of

Caiaphas, the cowardice of Pilate, and the treachery of Judas! but then, wo unto thee!

Life eternal, life eternal!

And now, my dear children, see what were the blessed results of this faithfulness on the part of these three Hebrew youths, in thus obeying the voice of conscience, and leaving all consequences to the Lord of lords. It was their martyrdom that led the proud Nebuchadnezzar, soon after, to commend them before all the people, because they refused to obey him, "trusted in God, and changed the king's word," ver. 28. It was their humble and sublime sincerity that calmed his idolatrous fury, humbled his pride, and prepared the way for that wonderful conversion which was afterwards to astonish the world, exalt the church, and give joy to the angels in heaven. Thus did these young men do good; "they yielded up their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any other god, except their own God." But this is not all: besides the excellent fruits which history records, their faithfulness, no doubt, produced others still more glorious, which eternity alone will reveal to us in the light of the last day. How many souls among the Israelites were now led by it to the knowledge of the truth! How many believers were encouraged and strengthened! How many of the Gentiles also were con-

verted to the true and living God ! A bright light shone for the enlightening of the heathen natives of the east around Daniel, the governor of Babylon, and the prophet of the Lord ; around his three illustrious friends ; and around all the Hebrew people ! This sublime example, given by the three Jewish rulers, doubtless was not lost. These were days when sages of all countries came to the east, to the Babylonian empire, to become acquainted with "the unknown God." They arrived from all quarters of the world at Babylon. These were times when such men as Pythagoras, and Anacharsis, and Thales, and Anaximander, and Solon, and it is said even Zoroaster and Confucius visited the east. It is evident that bright flashes and clear illuminations of revelation must at this time have beamed upon the Gentiles. The last day will discover all the Naamans, the Ruths, the Lydias, the Corneliuses, whom the Lord raised up during the lifetime of Daniel and his friends. Then it shall be seen, that in their integrity, their upright heart was now taught to choose the best of portions, the wisest of measures, the most salutary of counsels.

FOURTEENTH LESSON.

DANIEL iii. 19—25.

(THE place of the ordinary catechist was supplied on this occasion by one of his colleagues.)

You saw in the last lesson, my dear children, how it was that the three young Hebrews incurred the wrath and indignation of king Nebuchadnezzar. We are told this day, that their answer had the effect of aggravating his displeasure, and filling him with fury. Something terrible is depicted in his countenance, and in all the features of his face: so do violent passions change the expression of the human visage. When we do evil, it is generally seen in our looks; when we do good, it is manifested in the same way. When a man is converted, his whole aspect is altered, because the Spirit of God dwells in his heart. His countenance changes according to the prevailing state of his mind. Sometimes, it is true, the expression of the countenance is deceitful, and does not afford an index to what is in the heart. But this is rare, especially in the case of children. Deceive not yourselves, therefore, my dear children, for our Saviour tells us,

"there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known," Mat. x. 26. God knoweth your thoughts afar off; and men also will discover them from your looks.

Nebuchadnezzar, filled with rage, commanded the furnace, which was a kind of lime-kiln, to be heated seven times more than it was wont. He reflected not, that by increasing the heat of the fire, he was shortening the duration of the punishment, and abridging the sufferings of these young servants of God. Thus the ungodly often do the very reverse of what they intended. They imagine evil, but God turns it to good.

Then Nebuchadnezzar commanded the most mighty men in his army to cast the worshippers of the true God into the burning fiery furnace. It is very remarkable, yet it is unquestionably true, that the children of God, who have chosen to worship him only, have at all times been called to suffer afflictions and persecutions, like these three young Hebrews. "The time cometh," saith our Lord, "that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service."

Often have the children of God been treated as common malefactors, and put to death as the worst of criminals. I shall mention one or two instances of the kind, as we are upon the subject of martyrdoms. And first I will relate to you, my dear children, a circumstance

which happened a long time ago in that part of France which is now called the department of the Saone and Loire. You are aware that this is the district where most of the *colporteurs*, employed by the Geneva Evangelical Society, are at work, and that there are many faithful ministers there, preaching the word of life to those who have turned from darkness to light. The event to which I refer occurred nearly 1700 years ago, that is, A. D. 177. Christianity had already reached this part of France ; for some Christians having come from Asia, ascended the Saone and Loire, and established themselves in these regions, and especially in the city of Autun, which the colporteurs have visited, and where there is a Roman Catholic bishop, who is very much opposed to the word of God. There reigned at that time at Rome an emperor, who, though possessed of some good qualities, was yet a persecutor of the Christians. His name was Marcus Aurelius. The heathen worship still prevailed at the city of Autun, and it was that of the goddess Cybele. She had a large image erected to her honour ; but it was not of gold, like that of which Daniel speaks. On certain days this image was shown through the streets, attended by multitudes of priests ; and all the people who met it were obliged to bow down before it, as in the case of that of Nebuchadnezzar.

While all the people were falling on their knees before this idol, a young man who happened to be in the crowd remained standing. The multitude called out to him to kneel, but he would not; whereupon they took and led him before the prefect, who asked him if he was a Christian. The young man, who was called Symphorian, answered that he was, and, said he, “I worship the God that created the heavens and the earth, neither will I worship your idol.”

Then the governor, like Nebuchadnezzar, fell into a violent rage, and ordered his head to be cut off. The people all assembled together again, to accompany the young man to the place of his execution, when suddenly a voice was heard: My son, my son ; (it was the mother of Symphorian,) my son, my son ! may the living God be with thee ; my son, be firm—let us not fear death—let us lift our eyes on high to heaven, where our soul hath its life:

You can conceive the joy which this young man felt when he heard the voice of his mother. He was not, indeed, cast into a burning fiery furnace ; but he received a stroke of a sabre, and his head rolled on the ground ; it was as if he had been thrown into the burning furnace.

At the time of the reformation, also, there were many Christians in the department of the Saone and Loire, and, as in Geneva, they

cried, “To the Rhone, to the Rhone!” so there they cried, “To the Saone!” and they threw them into the river. Thus, even in our own days, not long since, in one of the cantons of Switzerland, a man, who had come there to preach the gospel, was plunged several times in a pond of water, until he was nearly dead.

This shows the enmity of the heart against God, which manifests itself in Switzerland, as it formerly did in Babylon, and in the department of the Saone and Loire, and as it still continues to do in the latter place.

“And because the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace was exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.”

Probably these soldiers of the king of Babylon exceeded their orders; and they were consumed by the fire which they themselves had kindled. Thus they who persecute the children of God become victims themselves. Nebuchadnezzar, who was present, saw those whom he had sent to execute his cruel edict perish by the flames.

Struck by this sight, he approached to look into the furnace, and instead of seeing three men therein consumed to ashes, he beheld four men walking about, in perfect composure, in the midst of the fire. Three had been thrown in, but who was the fourth, whose form is described as like the Son of

God? It was the Eternal Word, the only Son of the Father, the second person in the sacred Trinity, who had already appeared upon earth, before he was born of the Virgin Mary. We frequently read of manifestations of the Son of God in the Old Testament. It was he who went down into the furnace to deliver these poor youths; they had put their trust in him, and he came to their relief; and now these young men walk about in the midst of the fire; they celebrate their deliverer; their hearts are full of gratitude and love; they enjoy the most perfect happiness in the midst of this burning furnace, because Jesus Christ is with them.

Read the twenty-third Psalm for me—The Shepherd here spoken of is Jesus. When any of his children fall into affliction, or into any distress, Jesus is with them, and they find peace and happiness in his presence. Thus, when death has visited a Christian family, and taken away some one of its most cherished members, so that there is a great cry of grief heard therein, the Lord Jesus Christ comes into the midst of that family, as he did into the burning fiery furnace, to the three pious young Israelites. Vain are all the consolations of earthly friends: but Jesus, who is present with his mourning children, is the true comforter. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Behold, I am with you

always, even unto the end of the world." Oh! what a happiness it is to have Jesus with us! His presence can change scenes of sorrow into joy! I am persuaded that these young Hebrews were never happier in their lives than at this moment. I remember, once, to have seen a poor woman, a member of the Moravian church, on the banks of the Rhine, who had been confined to a bed of weakness and of suffering for the last thirty years: she had never left it during that period, except on one occasion, when the French, having come into her country with an army, threw her into a cart, and conveyed her to a distant village. And yet I never saw a person so peaceful and so happy. And why was this? It was because Jesus was with her—Jesus was in that house, in the chamber where she dwelt, as, formerly, in the furnace: "Jesus," said she, "is my Saviour; Jesus is my Saviour;" and this thought continually filled her mind with new joy. Such, dear children, will be your case in those moments when you pass through great trials, if ye be in Jesus.

There was once an old Christian, who, when a child, had heard the apostle John preach in Asia Minor. His name was Polycarp. When he had reached his eightieth year, he was called upon to deny the Lord Jesus Christ. "Four-score years," said he, "have I served him, and he never did me

any wrong ; how shall I now deny my Lord and my God ? ” Afterwards he was brought to the stake, and burned alive. When the flame began to reach him, he prayed to the Lord, and said : “ I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast permitted me to be one of thy witnesses, and to drink of the cup of thy Christ.” And the Christians who stood by weeping, heard these words.

Why was Polycarp joyful in the midst of the flames ? Jesus Christ was with him.

In the city of Prague, in Bohemia, where there were many priests who did not preach the truth, there once lived a Christian preacher named John Huss. Some rich layman built a church like this, and called it Bethlehem ; and John Huss who was a priest himself, preached the word of God in it. The priests were greatly enraged against him ; he was seized and carried away to Constance, in the eastern part of Switzerland, where there was at the time a great assembly, or council of all the heads of the Christian church. Huss refused to retract what he had preached. They caused him to be invested with the sacerdotal robes, and put a cup into his hand ; his robes were then taken off him, and the cup torn out of his hand, to intimate that he was deprived of his office as a priest. Upon this he said : “ I place all my confidence in my God and Saviour, and I know I shall this day drink the cup of salvation in heaven.”

Next, a paper cap was placed on his head, with the word "*Heresiarch*," chief of heretics, written upon it. "My Saviour and my God," said he, "has worn for me a crown of thorns; why should I not endure for him this reproach?" Then rushing upon him, they bore him to the stake, and while the flames were surrounding him, they heard him singing hymns. Once when the flames permitted them to get a glimpse of him, they saw his lips move; he was praying; Christ was with him, as he had been with the three young men in the furnace, and he was happy to go to his Saviour and his God.

I will only mention one instance more, which happened somewhat later, at the period of the reformation, when Martin Luther had already appeared in Germany, and Farel in France. In the city of Brussels, the capital of Belgium, where the reformed Christians were first put to death, three young men, Augustinian monks, had received the word of God into their hearts. There was a great deal of hostility and persecution in that country, against those who embraced the gospel in its purity; and these three young men were brought before the magistrates, who commanded them to renounce Jesus Christ, and to worship saints. On their refusing, they were dragged into the market-place to be burned at the stake; and the moment the faggots were set on fire, they exclaimed,

“Lord Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us.” The first thing that was burned was their bonds, and did they avail themselves of this to run away?.....No, though they found themselves at liberty, they did not attempt to escape; but taking one another by the hand, they knelt down, and lifting up their hands thus joined together, to heaven, they cried with one voice: “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us!”. And the flames and smoke suffocated them. Why had these young men such courage? Because Jesus Christ was with them, as he had been with the young Hebrews of whom the prophet speaks.

And now, my dear children, I have something to say to you, to which I entreat you to pay the most serious attention. You shall all have to pass, one time or other, through a furnace much more terrible than that into which the three young Hebrews were cast; I say not merely some, but all of you. This furnace is the world. And to show you that this is no exaggeration, I will read to you what St. John says of it: “The whole world,” saith he, “lieth in wickedness,” 1 John v. 19. In a certain sense you are already in the world, but hereafter you shall be in it in a more perilous manner. Read 1 Pet. v. 8. “The devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour;” and 1 Cor. xv. 33. “Evil communications corrupt good

manners." "Behold," saith our Lord, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," Matt. x. 16. The world is like a place where there are wolves; and what do they devour? lambs; and ye are the lambs. The world! that, as I have already said, is the furnace which you are called to enter, and I repeat, it is more terrible than the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, for that only killed the body, but this endangers the eternal happiness of the soul.

To continue faithful in this furnace, you have need of two things. First, you must *be born of God*. "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world," that is, he is not lost. You have been born of man, but there is a birth of God, and it is a conversion of the heart. If you enter into the furnace of the world without this new birth, alas! it will consume you, it will burn up all the instructions which you have received, and moreover it will bring your souls into the eternal fire of hell.

The second thing necessary to escape the furnace of the world, is faith in Christ. This will preserve you, like the three young Hebrews, in the furnace of this world and from that of the world to come.

Come, then, to Christ Jesus, come to the Saviour, come to the Son of God, who went down to his servants in the fiery furnace. You see he is not difficult of access, since he

himself approaches the young who have need of him. May you find him at the outset of life ; then the wicked one shall not touch you while you are passing through this world ; and one day, you shall be received into everlasting habitations.

FIFTEENTH LESSON.

DANIEL iii. 26—30 ; iv. 1—8.

DEAR children, last Sunday, as I am informed, you left the three young Hebrews in the burning fiery furnace. I shall, therefore, say a few words more on their deliverance. But our attention shall be principally directed, on the present occasion, to a wonderful account of a wonderful conversion ; that of a heathen conqueror, an emperor, the destroyer of Jerusalem, the terrible Nebuchadnezzar !

I say not merely “a wonderful conversion,” but “a wonderful account of a wonderful conversion;” for if this event is full of the most intense interest, it is rendered much more affecting and instructive, by the fact, that the account of it is given by Nebuchadnezzar himself. Yes, it is he himself, who relates it to all the people and nations of his empire, in that sublime decree, shall I call it? or in that humble and touching confession, the first eight verses of which you have just read.

Behold this great mighty monarch ! he has just recovered from a dreadful malady ; and what was that malady ? He had been out

of his mind. For seven years deprived of his reason like a beast of the field, he had eaten grass as an ox ; he had suffered his beard and his hair to grow like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails like the claws of a bird. But at the end of seven years, his reason returns, and immediately, being re-established on his throne, he resolves to make a public acknowledgment of his gratitude, and to proclaim the praises of the Lord his God, humbling himself in the dust before him, in the sight of all the people of his kingdom.

“ I thought it good,” saith he, “ to show the signs and wonders that the Most High hath wrought towards me ! How great are his signs ! how mighty are his wonders ! Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment ; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

Indeed, there are few passages in Scripture more affecting than the account which this proud conqueror gives himself, to all the people and nations over whom he ruled, of his pride and of the righteous judgment of God, of his humiliation, his loss of reason, his degradation to the condition of a brute, and subsequently his restoration and his adoring gratitude. On the one hand, how forcibly does he preach to us of the power and mercy of God ! and on the other, how strikingly does he show us what integrity

and humility, faith is capable of teaching to the proudest and most impetuous nations ! But, before we speak of the conversion of the king of Babylon, let us see that we understand the meaning of that word.

“Conversion,” in its original meaning, signifies a “turning ;” and, in its scriptural application, it implies that operation whereby a man whose affections and hopes tended towards this earth, this world and sin, is led to turn them back towards God, heaven, and holiness.

Now, my dear children, according to the Bible, not merely the heathen have need of such a conversion, but all men, without exception, from the feeble old man who totters on the brink of the grave, to the tender infant that has scarcely learned to walk. All, at their birth, bring into the world a heart without the love of God, selfish affections, irregular desires, sinful passions ; so that to enter the kingdom of heaven, they must be enabled, before death, to turn to their Creator, and to say to him with sincerity, “Here I am, Lord ; what wilt thou have me to do ? O my God, I love thee, I long after thee; do with me what seemeth thee good. I have considered my ways ; I have entered upon the path of thy commandments ; I desire to do thy will, O my God ! thy favour now is better than life to me !” This is conversion.

This happy change, the scriptures tell us,

is the work of the power of God in the heart of man ; and it is by his Spirit, and through the instrumentality of faith that he effects it. Ah ! when the sinner is enabled to believe, on the authority of God's word, that he is the object of God's love, that he is saved by grace, washed in the blood of the Lamb, that "his transgressions are forgiven and his sins covered," Psal. xxxii., it is then he turns to the Lord, thirsts after the living God, and experiences that "old things have passed away, and all things become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. What keeps the sinner away from God is, that he *feels he is a sinner*; and because of his sinfulness, he shuns the thought of God, like Adam after his fall, when he hid himself among the trees of the garden. He says to God in secret, like Simon Peter, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man!" his faith is the faith of devils ; he believes in God, and trembles. But if he knew God as a Saviour, his faith would be that of a Christian, and he would love much, because much had been forgiven him.

Now, in the Bible this change is called conversion, a new birth, regeneration, a being born from above. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, (or from above,) he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. And we have this day to speak of the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar.

Yes, there was a moment when God, by his Spirit, drew to himself and towards heaven the heart of this idolatrous monarch, before so proud and so carnal. But to dispose him to seek his happiness and his life on high, He employed toward him three successive dispensations.

1. He gave him to witness great and astonishing miracles.

2. By the admirable example of his faithful servants, and especially by the martyrdom of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he made an impression upon his conscience.

3. He brought him down by severe humiliations, and caused him to pass through the sufferings of life, and the furnace of affliction.

You saw, last Sunday, the courage with which the young Hebrews suffered themselves to be cast into the fiery furnace; that they chose the fire of the furnace, rather than the displeasure of God, and feared him who was able to destroy their bodies, much less than him who had power to destroy both soul and body in hell. To-day you are called to witness the admirable fruits of their faithfulness, and the impression which it made upon their persecutor; and you will see that after he had been afflicted by the Almighty with temporary insanity, and had recovered from this humiliating calamity, he turned with a sincere and grateful heart unto the

Lord, remembering, no doubt, with thankfulness, the example which the young Israelites had given him. You have seen these young believers in the fire; now see how they come out of it.

The furnace had been heated seven times more than it was wont; and the most mighty men in the army of the king were commanded to throw the young Hebrew governors into it. They are seized; not a moment is allowed them for meditation; they are not even divested of their court dress which they had on; time only is given to bind them; they are cast into the furnace, with their coats and their hosen, their hats, and their other garments; and such is the violence of the flame, and the "urgency of the king's command," that the officers who took them up to cast them in, fell dead in the execution of their task.

But soon you know what was seen! Four men appeared walking in the midst of the fire, as in a shady arbour, and they had no hurt; their bonds only were burned!!

And then mark the feelings of the king. He is astonished; he can no longer hold back....."Behold," exclaims he, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Then he came nearer to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,

ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come hither."

He now acknowledges that there is a sovereign God who reigns above, and before whom his royal majesty is as nothing. And when he sees these three young men come uninjured out of the fiery furnace, hear how he praises the God of their deliverance: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel, and delivered his servants." At the same time hear how warmly and how nobly the great monarch commends these young men for having resisted his commands, "changed the king's word," and chosen to obey God rather than man. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God."

"Them that honour me," saith the Lord, "I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

Now hear again the decree which the king of Babylon published. "Therefore I make a decree that every people, nation and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is

no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon."

Thus you see, dear children, the faithfulness of these young Hebrews, far from endangering the cause of their religion in Babylon, only had the effect of extending its influence, and surrounding it with a brighter lustre. And thus did God, who doubtless purposed to bring many souls to salvation, during the captivity of his people, accomplish the conversion of this powerful prince, who was at that time called the scourge of the Almighty, and the master of the world. He had, it is true, already expressed a great veneration for the God of Daniel, when that prophet revealed to him his miraculous dream; but his subsequent victories, the vastness of his empire, and his extraordinary success, seem to have completely turned his head, insomuch that he looked upon himself as a kind of demi-god, and even cast into a fiery furnace those who refused to acknowledge his fancied divinity. But when he saw that they gave up their bodies, rather than serve any God but their own God, and that a heavenly messenger, "one like unto the Son of God," was sent to secure them from the influence of the fire, and deliver them unhurt from the flames; then he acknowledged the *sovereignty* of God, and commended them for disobeying him, that they might *obey* that

mighty being ; and forbade, on pain of death, that any of his subjects should speak against them. "There is no other God," said he, "that can deliver after this sort."

Such were the consequences of the faithfulness of the three Israelites to Nebuchadnezzar. He was convinced that the invisible Being who had inspired them with such exalted sentiments, and wrought for them such a deliverance, could be no other than the true God ; he acknowledged him before all his people, and even published a decree requiring them to give him glory.

But shall we infer from this, that Nebuchadnezzar was converted ? Oh no, my friends, far from it !

Convinced and *converted* are two very different things. Conviction is not faith ; conviction is only conversion of the understanding, while real conversion is conversion of the will. To believe that the Bible is divine is not enough ; it is not faith. To believe in the book when it is closed, is not faith ; we must believe in it when it is open. We may believe that Daniel was a prophet of the Lord, yet this will not suffice ; we must believe all that the prophet has declared. This is faith—and for this, we must believe that by nature we are fallen, corrupt, and ruined ; that we are exposed to eternal perdition, because the wages of sin is death,

everlasting death. We must believe that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life;” we must receive this truth into our hearts as a reality; we must feed upon it, and live upon it. Now Nebuchadnezzar, as we shall see hereafter, had not yet reached this point; his heart was still proud, selfish, carnal and earthly; he was all for the glory which comes from men; careless about that which cometh from God. “How can ye believe,” saith our Lord, “who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God!” What, therefore, had he need of? Humiliation.

Let us see then how God proceeds to deal with him. He takes away from him his power, his might, his glory, his kingdom, yea, his very reason; he afflicts him with madness. Yes, Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of the world, the king of kings, the head of gold, is reduced to the condition of a beast of the field, and doomed to eat grass like an ox! Nor is it until after seven years, that he recovers his reason again.

But then, what an awakening! Oh! what a moment must that have been, when at length his eyes were opened. He contemplates himself; he finds himself in close confinement; none are allowed to approach

him ; he surveys his person, he is hideous ; his hair and his nails have grown like those of a brute, he has eaten grass as an ox ; he reflects on the past. “O my God,” he exclaimed, “I have been mad !” But now behold him in that state to which God desired to bring him, humbled, self-abased, trembling at his word, sending for the prophet of the Lord, and receiving at his lips, words of salvation and of peace.

And perhaps, my friends, there are some in this place, who have passed through similar ways. Long did they say, like Nebuchadnezzar, “God is the true God ; his word is true ; he only is able to deliver.” But this conviction had no vitality in their hearts, they did not feel it as a reality. They were without a real, living faith, and God might have said to them, “how can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from above ?”

They sought the favour, the approbation of men ; their treasure was on earth ; they desired, perhaps, the favour of God, but it was in a secondary degree ; their portion was in this world, their happiness in the things of time, and not in the assurance of their acceptance with God. But how did the Lord deal with them ? From one, he took away his health, and laid him on a bed of sickness, thus saying to him : “My son, now give me

thine heart !” Another he deprived of his fortune, saying to him : “ My son, set thine affections on things above, for in heaven thou hast a better and more enduring substance.” Another he bereft of a wife, a husband, a son, or a daughter. Ah ! and the child of sorrow exclaimed, henceforth this world is a grave-yard to me ; I am a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth ; I shall go mourning all the days of my life ! Yes, my child, thou art indeed a stranger and a pilgrim ; but seek thy better country ; come to thy Saviour ; he is the resurrection and the life ; he will comfort thee, and wipe away all tears from thine eyes.

Such are God’s ways with his children.

The miracles which he had witnessed, did not change the heart of the king of Babylon. For this, something more is required than miracles ; the word of faith is necessary. “ If they believe not Moses and the prophets,” saith our Lord, “ neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” There is need, therefore, of the word of God. To this Nebuchadnezzar had been inattentive at first ; he believed it vaguely ; he did not receive its testimony ; but now that he is humbled, hear his language !

“ Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied.”

What simplicity ! It is no longer the king of kings, the demi-god, the lord of kingdoms, no ; *it is the king to his people.*

And what is his demand touching his people ? Not now that they should worship him, no ; but that “ peace might be multiplied to them.” He has found that peace in God, who alone can give it, “ because he only can deliver ; ” and he desires that all his subjects likewise may receive it.

“ I thought it good to show the signs and wonder that the Most High God wrought toward me.”

Yes, he feels it a duty ; he feels called upon to humble himself ; he is desirous to give glory to the God of his mercies before all people ; and to show them the way of salvation. But hear his decree. He cannot begin without an expression of gratitude ; he stops to exclaim, “ How great are his signs ! and how mighty are his wonders ! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion from generation to generation.” The Christian feels the same necessity.

But the king of Babylon, in his decree, before he tells the people of the mental derangement under which he had laboured for seven years, informs them of the miraculous revelations by which the God of heaven, twelve months before, had warned him of it, as a just punishment for his pride. “ I, Ne-

buchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house and flourishing in my palace : I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed, and the visions of my head, troubled me," verses 4, 5.

In our next, God willing, we shall see the sequel.

SIXTEENTH LESSON.

DANIEL iv. 9—26.

You remember where we are at present; the speaker here is Nebuchadnezzar; we have here a proclamation, which, issuing from his royal palace on the banks of the Euphrates, echoes through all the nations of his immense empire.

Now this decree of the king of Babylon, Daniel was inspired by God to hand down to us in the pages of revelation. In like manner, the Holy Ghost caused to be inscribed in the same divine volume, the speeches of Job's friends, the words of Jethro, the decree of the Persian king, and subsequently, the words of Pilate and Felix, the letter of Claudius Lysias to the governor Felix, yea, and even the words of the Devil to our Lord! But all these things, when once in the bible, are a part of the word of God; that is to say, he is the recorder of them, as much as if he spoke them to us with his own mouth from heaven, amid lightnings, and earthquakes, and tempest.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

If we could devote more time to the study

of Daniel, I would wish, as we proceed in the history of his life, to read to you the prophecies which Ezekiel and Jeremiah published during the same period, the one in Chaldea by the river Chebar, the other, first in Jerusalem, and afterwards in Egypt.

I would notice the events which passed in the history of Nebuchadnezzar, between the deliverance of the three Hebrew youths, recorded in the third chapter, and what is related in the chapter now under our consideration.

I would show you this great commander following a career of the most brilliant successes, burning Jerusalem, destroying the mighty Nineveh, and making himself master of Tyre, after a siege of thirteen years. I would then read to you what Ezekiel has written in his thirtieth chapter, seventeen years before he had predicted the ruin of all these nations, and of the powerful Egypt; and finally, how he had declared that in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto him saying: "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus, yet had he no wages, nor his army from Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and

take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be wages for his army," Ezek. xxix. 18—20. "I will make the land waste—I will also destroy the idols.....and there shall no more be a prince of the land of Egypt," xxx. 12, 13—Comp. xxix. 14, 15. I would then show how wonderfully all this has been accomplished, during a series of ages; that since the time of Nebuchadnezzar, that is for 2449 years, Egypt, formerly one of the chief of kingdoms, has been the *basest* and has never ceased to *belong to strangers*, viz. the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Saracens, the Turks, the Mamelukes, the French, and the Arabs, and that it never has had either *kings, or governors, or princes of its own land*; thus remarkably fulfilling the words of the prophet: "They shall be a base kingdom the basest of kingdoms. They shall no more rule over the nations," Ezek. xxix. 14—16.

But let us go on with our history. Nebuchadnezzar, as we have seen, twenty-five years after his vision of the image, had returned from Egypt laden with immense treasures; he had beautified the city of Babylon, and made it the most magnificent of cities. Intoxicated with glory, he was reposing, after his long wars and bloody successes, when suddenly his mind was violently agitated by a dream which filled him with alarm. "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in

mine house, and flourishing in my palace : I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me."

You know that in his consternation he sent for Daniel, whom probably he had neglected in the days of his prosperity. But, however this may be, after consulting in vain all the pretended sages of his empire, he related to the man of God all that had happened to him, and asked him what he was to think of it.

It was here we left off last Sunday. Let us now resume the explanation of our verses, and we shall find in them six or seven points which deserve our attention.

1. We have the king's address to Daniel, ver. 9.

2. We have his account of what he had seen, ver. 10.

3. We have his account of what he had heard, verses 13—15.

4. The angel's interpretation, ver. 16.

5. The confirmation of the angel's sentence, ver. 17.

6. The king's demand to Daniel, and the violent perturbation of the prophet, ver. 18, 19. For an hour he remains silent and motionless ; he is troubled, confounded, and unable to answer.

7. The terrible answer of the prophet.—The king encourages him : " Belteshazzar, let

not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee," speak!—"My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee! The tree which thou sawest is thyself!" Ah! thou art no longer the head of gold! Thou art that tree stripped of its branches, torn up by the roots, and desolate; it is *thou* who art to become mad; to lose the heart of a man; to sink to the rank of a brute, and to eat grass like an ox! *thou* who art to be driven from among men for seven long years, until thou givest glory to the God above, and acknowledgest that the heavens do rule.

Let us begin with verse 9.

1. Hear this poor heathen monarch. It is but too evident that he was not converted at the time of this terrible dream, notwithstanding the lessons which he had already received. You see how he still chooses to call Daniel by the name of his god; Belteshazzar, that is, treasure of the god Bel; he addresses him not as a prophet, but as a sage, a magician: "Belteshazzar, master of the magicians." He speaks of him as having "the spirit of the holy gods," for he believed that there were good and benevolent as well as cruel and malignant gods. How such language must have grieved Daniel! On a former occasion, indeed, he had acknowledged that the God of Daniel was "the God of gods, and Lord of lords, and a revealer of secrets," and he had forbidden, on pain of death, that

any one should speak against him ; but you see that while this unhappy monarch was happy in the estimation of the world, and in his own estimation ; while he was in the enjoyment of health and prosperity, honoured and adored of men, but without the Holy Spirit, he heard the things of God only by half, he gave not his heart to them, he looked down with interest upon the religion of the Jew Daniel, from the lofty manner of his greatness, as he would look down from the terraces of his palace, or from his hanging gardens, on the richly laden vessel floating down the stream of the Euphrates to the seas. He thought, like many in the Roman Catholic Church, who imagine that they may believe in the divinity of the Bible, and in the supremacy of God, and yet worship images, saints, and demi-gods, such as the Virgin Mary, St. Anthony, St. Francis, St. Philomena, the angel Gabriel, and Michael the archangel. Hence in Spain, where the people have been at war for some years, there are thousands, who, while like Nebuchadnezzar, they admit Jehovah to be the true God, yet imagine that the Virgin Mary, and even the virgin of a certain place, *our lady of the seven sorrows*, commands their armies, and presides over the province of Navarre ; that she hears prayers offered up to her in the mountains and in the valleys ; that she searches the heart and the reins ; and

that she may be invoked, as Bel was, by the king of Babylon, though he is represented in the Bible of Daniel as a mere idol, even as the scriptures tell us nothing of the power of Mary.

Yea, even among ourselves, in Geneva, there are many who resemble this Chaldean monarch. They believe, indeed, that the prophets and apostles were from God, but they do not concern themselves to know what they taught; they do not study the Bible, but defer the consideration of it to some more convenient season, and in the meantime entertain the most pernicious errors. They imagine, for example, that they are to be saved by their works, or rather by their sins; for where is the man that sinneth not? Have they not committed ten thousand times more sins than Adam? and yet he was driven from paradise. They believe Jesus Christ only to be a creature, and yet they call him Saviour; as if a creature could save them, could dwell in them, and they in him! They think they can justify themselves before God by their tears and their repentance; though they have neither the one nor the other, and though all the angels of heaven, were they to offer themselves up as a sacrifice for them, could not blot out one of their sins. They believe neither in a hell, nor in the devil, nor in eternal torments, though the Bible speaks of them in the plainest terms.

Ah ! let them fall into trouble, let them be called to pass through the deep waters of affliction, and then perhaps they may open their Bibles, with a desire to learn its true meaning, and say, like the king of Babylon, "Now I praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

But let us pass on to ver. 10, and let us hear what the king *saw*; which is our second subject. While he slumbers at midnight on his bed, a vision troubles him; he sees a magnificent "tree in the midst of the earth." This "tree in the midst of the earth" represented the power of Babylon, which, by the immense conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, had become, as it were, the centre of the then known world.

"The height thereof was very great," to intimate the glory to which the king of Babylon had risen. "It grew and was strong," symbolizing the irresistible power of the Chaldean armies. "The height thereof reached to heaven;" and did not Nebuchadnezzar aspire to be a god, and require divine honours to be paid to him? "The sight thereof reached to the ends of the earth;" the name of Nebuchadnezzar was everywhere in the mouths of men, in the towns and in the country, in the palace and in the cottage, as was the case twenty-five

years ago with Napoleon. “The leaves thereof were fair;” nothing could be more magnificent than the festivals, the palaces, the officers and ceremonies of Babylon. “The fruit thereof was much, and it was meat for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.” Not only was this empire glorious, but it was prosperous and fostering. Great fortunes were made under it; the people of Nebuchadnezzar were happy under his government; an admirable order prevailed in the administration; the weak were protected, the rich enjoyed their wealth in peace.

But notice, in the third place, what Nebuchadnezzar *heard*. While this great sight was yet under his eye, he saw descend from heaven an angel, whom he calls “a watcher and an holy one,” because the holy angels do not sleep like us, but arise, attentive to the commands of the Almighty; they fly with the swiftness of wind, or of a flame of fire, to execute the purposes of his will.

Can you tell me some of the reasons why God has ordained sleep for us, in our present state; I mean not reasons which regard the body, but the soul?

1. We may believe that men would be much more wicked, did not sleep intervene, to calm their passions, to interrupt their quar-

rels, their disputes, and their intrigues, and to impose upon them, by force, some interval of rest.

2. It was designed to remind man of an important truth. What is that truth?

That he must die.

Yes, doubtless, it is to remind him of this, that he is laid every day, as it were, upon a bed of death; he neither hears, nor sees, nor eats, nor drinks; at least, if his sleep be sound, he is not conscious of what he thinks; and when he awakes, he is as if he had not lived during that interval. Ah! my friends, let such reflections as these occupy your thoughts at the close of each successive day: My God, I am about to lay me down to sleep for this night; but soon I shall sleep the sleep of death, to be awakened only on the morning of eternity by the song of angels, the joyful shouts of the saints, and the sound of the trump of God. Therefore, O my God! into thy hands I commend my spirit; and every morning think once more, O my God! I have, as it were, died and risen again! O! may it be to please thee, and to walk in the light of thy countenance! And when my last waking comes, may it be to go to thee, to behold thy face, and to rejoice for ever in thy presence! May I be enabled to adopt the language of David: "As for me, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness"—and of Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that

he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and, though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another,” Job xix. 23—27.

But hear the words of the “watcher and the holy one.” “Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit ; but let the beasts of the field get away from under it, and the fowls of the air from its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field.”

And hear, again, (which is our fourth subject,) the angel’s interpretation of this ; from which it is evident that it is not a mere tree that is in question, but a man. “Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth : let his heart be changed from a man’s, and let a beast’s heart be given unto him, and let seven times pass over him.”

Our fifth subject is of still greater importance, and requires a more particular explanation ; it is the solemn confirmation of the angel’s sentence, ver. 17.

“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the Holy Ones.”

1. What are we to understand by the expression, “This matter is by the decree of

the watchers," while ver. 24 it is said, "this is the decree of the Most High?" The meaning seems to be, that God was pleased to employ in the affair the ministration of angels, to whom he sometimes entrusts the conduct of the world, and especially of his church. As the Almighty not unfrequently overrules human affairs by directing the deliberations of his creatures, so that their resolutions are at once, though in a different sense, the decrees of God, and the decrees of men; so, in like manner, he would appear to have confided to his angels the care of humbling the king of Babylon, for his salvation. In one sense, then, it was "the decree of the Most High," in another, "the decree of the watchers." Read what is said of angels, Heb. i. 14.

2. And what are we to understand by the words, "The demand is by the word of the holy ones?" Ah! my friends, they are well worthy of our attention. Why did God send this chastisement upon the king of Babylon? It was in answer to the prayers of the saints.

Yes, there were many saints in Babylon, Jerusalem, Egypt, and by the river Chebar, who prayed, and said: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, glorify thy name, and let thy face shine upon the sanctuary which is desolate!" And they were heard; and it was because of these little ones that the great Nebuchadnezzar was about to lose

his throne and his reason. “The demand is by the holy ones.” It is written, “Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily,” Luke xviii. 8. These praying people were poor dispersed Jews, slaves and captives, whom no one regarded; yet did they shake the empire of Babylon by their prayers, because by their prayers “they moved the hand that guides the world!”

Ah! my brethren, this our fathers well knew. They thought it right, indeed, to provide every human means for the security of their country: but they knew that the best security was to have among them a praying people that would cry day and night to their Father in heaven. I honour the magistrates of my country, whoever they be; but as guardians of my country’s safety, I regard the wisest of them as children compared with the citizen who knows how to pray. When a people cease to pray, God, to punish them, often “takes away the understanding of their counsellors,” he divides their courage, or spoils them of it, and “unlooses the girdle of their kings.”

You remember the history of Simon Peter, Acts xii. While the church still mourns for the martyrdom of James, Peter is apprehended and cast into prison. Bound with two chains, by which he is fastened to two

soldiers, and guarded by a strong military force, he is secured in his dungeon by a massive iron gate, and the keepers before the door keep the prison. The next day, the first of Easter, is fixed for his execution, and all the people of Jerusalem await the tragic scene. But in a little upper room, in the house of a woman called Mary, “prayer,” we are told, “was made, without ceasing, of the church unto God for him.” And, behold ! while the king sleeps in his palace, about two or three o’clock in the morning, there is a knocking at the door of Mary’s house. A damsel, named Rhoda, comes to hearken, and when she recognizes Peter’s voice, she opens not the gate for gladness, but runs in and tells how Peter is at the gate. Impossible ! exclaim the disciples. Thou art mad ! Poor weak believers ! Where is your faith ? You pray, and yet cannot believe that God has heard you ! Peter enters ; they cry out for joy ; he beckons to them to hold their peace, and tells them how that a “watcher and an holy one,” even a holy angel, had been sent to deliver him out of the hand of his enemies. But this is not all. A short time after, the king comes down to Cæsarea, to celebrate a solemn feast ; at dawn of day he ascends his royal throne ; his robes, Josephus tells us, being made of silver stuff, shone with so bright a lustre, that it was impossible to behold him without mingled feelings of

respect and fear ; he was only fifty-four years of age ; his countenance beautiful, and his figure noble ; he was the intimate friend of the Roman emperor, and every species of property seemed to be his own ; all the nobles of his kingdom stood around him. He speaks with commanding eloquence from his throne, and the people exclaim, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." But at this moment "a watcher and an holy one," an angel of the Lord, smites him ; immediately he is racked with the most excruciating inward pains ; and he is borne to his palace, where he is eaten of worms in his bed, and shortly dies in the most horrible torture. The people of God had prayed in the house of Mary for the deliverance of Peter ; and it might have been said of Herod as it was of Nebuchadnezzar, "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones."

You must not, however, suppose that in either case the people of God prayed for the destruction or punishment of their respective persecutors. No ; they prayed for the deliverance of the church of God ; and the scriptures commanded them, as it does us all, to pray for rulers. In Babylon, they prayed rather for the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar, and he was converted ; but how ? He was deprived of his reason ; he was insane for seven years ; he became like a beast of the

field ; and, in the depths of his humiliation, the Lord was pleased to visit and to save him !

But, lastly, hear the answer of Daniel, and observe his emotion. This is our sixth subject.

What a moment ! what a scene ! The king of Babylon stands trembling ; Daniel remains in silence. He is amazed and confounded ; almost a whole hour elapses before he finds utterance for his thoughts. He loved the king, who was his benefactor ; he honoured, admired, and prayed for him ; and what does he see ?.....Nebuchadnezzar, mad, naked, stupid, eating grass like an ox !! “ My lord,” cries he, when the king has encouraged him, “ the dream be to them that hate thee !” The king insists : “ Belteshazzar, let not the dream, nor the interpretation thereof, trouble thee.” At length hear Daniel. “ O ! what a moment ! “ *It (the tree) is thou, O king.* ”

“ Whereas, the king saw a watcher, &c.this is the interpretation thereof, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king. They shall drive thee from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field ;— and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

“ And, whereas, they commanded to leave

the stump of the tree roots ; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee ; after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.”

What a sentence pronounced against the greatest of the kings of the earth ! Not only to be despised, but driven from among men ; not only driven from among men, but deprived of reason, stripped of everything human, reduced to the condition of a brute, doomed to wander about without clothes, to receive on his naked limbs the dew of heaven, to sleep the whole year round beneath the light of the stars, like the beasts of the field, his beard hanging down upon his breast, and his nails suffered to grow like the claws of an eagle !

Let us learn from this, my children, the sovereignty of God. Why are not we like this man ? “ Who made thee to differ from another ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received ? ”

SEVENTEENTH LESSON.

DANIEL iv. 27—37.

ON Sunday last we saw the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and we heard the prophet's awful explanation of it. It now remains for us to consider the miraculous accomplishment of the dream, and its interpretation. The king himself relates it in that humble and affecting proclamation which he addressed, 569 years b. c., to the peoples, nations, and languages of this vast empire.

“All this came upon king Nebuchadnezzar,” ver. 28.

A whole year of patience was allowed him after this terrible sentence; but to no purpose. “At the end of twelve months, as he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, and uttered words of vain boasting, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, “O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall drive thee from among men, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar.”

But before we proceed to this part of our

subject, we would notice one or two expressions in the latter part of Daniel's address to the king, which deserve our consideration.

You remember that our last lecture left us in the royal chamber of the king of Babylon. Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar were agitated by the most violent feelings. The prince on his throne, struck with terror, heard with trembling each word that fell from the lips of the prophet. Daniel, more troubled, perhaps, than the king himself, stood before the throne. For a whole hour he is unable to answer; he remains in silence; buried in meditation and in prayer. At length he is constrained to speak.

Alas! the tree which thou sawest, O king, is thyself! But after seven times have passed over thy head, and thou hast learned that "the heavens do rule," thy kingdom shall be restored to thee again. Then, in ver. 27, as a pastor of souls, a minister of the living God, he counsels the king. "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquity by showing mercy; and it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity;" that is, if haply the threatened chastisement may be averted, and the Lord may repent him of the evil which he hath denounced, as he did in the case of Nineveh, when she put on sackcloth and ashes; and in that of Ahab, when he humbled himself before him.

You must feel, my friends, that it was painful to Daniel, who loved Nebuchadnezzar, to fulfil towards him this severe mission, and to tell him of the judgments of God. But do you think he would have acted more charitably, if, after this long silence, he had contented himself with merely saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, this terrible dream has no reference to thee, thou hast nothing to fear, return to the affairs of thy kingdom, and live in peace?

What would you have said of such language and of such conduct?—that it was the language of a traitor, the conduct of a base impostor! Why deceive a man who confides in you, and comes to ask your advice? Do you desire his ruin? Do you seek the destruction of his soul? Are you his deadliest enemy? Hence, my children, you see what would be the duty of your friends, if any of you were to be seized with a mortal distemper. It would be to say to you: My dear child, to all human appearance thou art going soon to enter into the presence of thy God; but hear! and may my counsel be acceptable unto thee!—“break off thy sins by righteousness,” repent; and as thou hast not before thee the twelve months which were allowed to Nebuchadnezzar, perhaps not even twelve days, O cast thyself into the arms of Jesus Christ. Happy they who can reply to such an announcement: I am ready,

I am ready. Yes, Jesus, my Saviour, I am ready to go to thee, in the faith of thy redeemed !

But hear what was the advice of Daniel to the king of Babylon.

“ O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee,” that is, let it be received, let it be welcome ; “ break off thy sins by righteousness,” or by justice ; that is, by devoting thyself to the practice of justice, “ and thine iniquities, by showing mercy to the poor.”

Thus the English and other translations render verse 27 ; and this is evidently the real meaning. In other versions, however, especially Roman Catholic, it is rendered *redeem*. “ Redeem thy sins by justice, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor ;” but this is a very ill-chosen expression. The Hebrew or Chaldee word which Daniel uses, occurs ten or twelve times in the Bible, always in the sense of *to break, rescue, or deliver*, but never to *redeem*. Besides, the expression to *redeem thy sins*, is in itself absurd and inadmissible. Jesus Christ himself is never said to have *redeemed our sins*, but to have *redeemed us*, to have *redeemed us from our sins*.

Think not that I am dwelling needlessly long on this passage. We must be “ jealous with a godly jealousy,” to use the language of Scripture, when the doctrines of the gospel are at stake ; yea, I may say the gospel

itself; for the whole gospel is involved in the answer to this question: How can a sinner be redeemed from his sins? Ah! when that question is put to you, let your answer be, "*by the blood of Christ, the blood of the Lamb that was slain.*" But in the church of Rome, they teach the capital and fatal error that the sinner can redeem himself from his sins by his own works, and especially by his alms-deeds; and in support of an opinion so hostile to the whole tenor of the scriptures, they sometimes bring forward this passage of Daniel. True, we must give alms, and the man that does not, is no Christian; but it is not our alms that will save us—it is Christ. Nothing is more contrary to the gospel than this error of all false religions; neither can anything be more opposite to the doctrine of Daniel. No, it was not thus that this man of prayer desired to approach his God. Like us, he trusted in Christ Jesus! And when he prayed, he pleaded neither his alms nor any other of his works; works, alas! always mixed with imperfection, even in believers; no! he pleaded nothing but the free mercy of his God. Read his prayer, chap. ix. 16—19.

Here, you see, his whole suit is founded on Jesus Christ, whom he calls the Lord. He does not present his supplications, depending upon his own righteousness, but on the manifold and great mercies of his God; and for

himself, he speaks only of his sins. You will understand, my dear children, that whatever good works you may perform, they never can counterbalance your evil ones, for three reasons.

1. Were we to do all that is commanded us, still we should "be unprofitable servants," Luke xvii. 10; for, after all, we should have done no more than we were obliged to do, to avoid being rebellious. But if I do to-day no more than was commanded me, how can I atone for the past? The farmer who holds a piece of land from me for thirty years, without fulfilling the terms of his lease, does not acquit himself of his thirty years of debt, by paying the rent of his thirty-first year. Hence David, four hundred years before Daniel, shows the folly of those who sought to save themselves by their alms. "No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever," Psal. xlix. 7, 8.

2. To *justify*, not to say *redeem*, ourselves by our own works, we must observe the whole law; and if we violate that law in the least point, we fall under its curse. How, then, can we be justified, or redeemed by a law which curses and condemns us. See Eccl. vii. 20; Prov. xx. 9; Gal. v. 4; iii. 21, 22; Rom. iii. 19, 20. If, then, you are told of the *merit of works*, answer that you do not

believe it, since the works of man, being evil, merit only death. "The wages of sin," saith St. Paul, "is death;" therefore "life eternal is the gift of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." But,

3. Good works are not the cause of salvation, but the effect of it; they do not precede, but they follow it. Man cannot do any works which are really good before God, so long as he is without the love of God. He is without that love so long as his heart is unchanged. His heart is unchanged so long as he is without faith in Christ, as his Saviour. But as soon as he believes, his sins are pardoned, he is saved; when he is saved, his heart is changed; when his heart is changed, he loves; when he loves, he acts. It is written, "We love him, because he *first* loved us." Our works then follow, and do not precede the pardon of our sins; therefore they are not the cause of it. Thus a tree, which is wild by nature, does not begin to bring forth fruit until it has been grafted. Can it boast that it was grafted because of its fruits? Its fruits follow the grafting, and do not precede it. They are not, therefore, the cause, but the effect of it. Hence St. Paul says, "that however abundant our alms, our sufferings, and our sacrifices, without charity they are nothing," 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3. But true love cannot exist in the heart without faith. We must, therefore, begin by believing that we

are pardoned and saved by grace, ere we can love God. See Eph. ii. 8—10.

Why, then, does the Christian give alms, since it is not to purchase his salvation? Why? Simply that he may obey, imitate, and glorify God; follow Christ, and say to him: I love thee, O my Saviour, I desire to love thee, since thou hast so loved me! I am not my own, I do this for thee, I give myself to thee!

Such, then, was the exhortation of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar: Repent, *break off thy sins*, do justice and mercy. Such was the exhortation of Isaiah to the men of his time: "Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow," Isaiah i. 16, 17. Such was the solemn call of John the Baptist: "O generation of vipers, bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Such was the exhortation of the apostles to those who demanded: What must we do? "Save yourselves from this untoward generation, repent and be baptized, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such was the exhortation of the Saviour himself: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." But let us see what were the effects of these exhortations.

A respite of one entire year was allowed the Chaldean monarch. But, at the end of

twelve months, Nebuchadnezzar, (it is himself relates it,) walked in the palace of his kingdom, (attended, no doubt, by a brilliant train of courtiers and ambassadors;) and the king spake, and said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?”

I have told you that the grandeur and magnificence of Babylon were unrivalled. It had, for ages, been a noble city, and dated its foundation soon after the deluge. Nebuchadnezzar had almost built it anew, and made it the first of the wonders of the world. It is called in scripture, “the golden city, the glory of kingdoms,” the “queen of kingdoms,” the “beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency,” Isa. xiv. 4; xiii. 19; and, to express its formidable power, “the hammer of the whole earth,” Jer. l. 23. The famous Greek historian, Herodotus, who was born fifty-four years after Belshazzar, visited it to be an eye-witness of its wonders, and tells us that never was there anything so magnificent.

This testimony is confirmed by that of a great geographer called Strabo, who lived in the time of Jesus Christ; and of other celebrated historians, such as Diodorus, Siculus, Quintus Curtius, and Pliny, who were contemporaries either of our Lord or of his apostles.

The whole city, we are told, formed a perfect square, each side of which was fifteen miles long, making a circuit of sixty miles, and an area of 225 square miles. Its walls were, perhaps, the most stupendous work that ever existed. Constructed of brick, cemented together with bitumen, which grows hard by being exposed to the air, they rose to a height of 350 feet, and were eighty-seven thick. Twenty-five magnificent streets, running in parallel lines, 150 feet wide and fifteen miles long, traversed the city from north to south; being intersected by twenty-five others, of similar dimensions, from west to east. Thus there were fifty superb streets, terminated by 100 brazen gates, and forming, by their intersections, 676 large squares, with a perimeter of $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles. The houses round these squares were not less than from three to four stories in height, beautifully ornamented in front, and with courts and extensive gardens in the interior. The great river Euphrates, which flowed through the city, from north to south, was likewise enclosed between walls, equal in height to those which surrounded the city, and which were furnished with immense flights of steps leading to the bed of the river, which was usually greatly swollen by the melting of the snow in the months of July and August. These stairs were likewise shut in by high brazen gates.

But that which excited the greatest wonder in this incomparable city, was its temples of the god Bel, and its two royal palaces.

These latter edifices alone occupied a space of nearly three miles square ; but what was most admired in them, was their *hanging gardens*. These were immense parterres, formed on vaulted terraces, 400 feet square, rising one above the other, to the height of the walls. The terraces were built of stone, and covered first with sheets of lead, then with a layer of bitumen and reeds, and finally with a thick coating of earth, out of which rose clumps of different kinds of trees, of immense dimensions. On the topmost platform was constructed a spacious basin, filled with water from the Euphrates, which was forced up thither by a powerful hydraulic engine. Another work, which seems to have filled strangers with the highest idea of the genius of Nebuchadnezzar, was the passage, constructed of brick and bitumen, under the river Euphrates. This subterraneous labour had much analogy with the famous tunnel under the Thames.

You can conceive, then, the pride of Nebuchadnezzar. The nations of the earth were at his feet ; he had overcome them all ; their captives and their riches filled Babylon. He was the head of gold ! The heart of man is too weak to bear such successes without being lifted up. Alas ! amid such magnifi-

cence and such illusion, what effect could be expected from the vision of the tree, and its awful interpretation? The king, indeed, was alarmed for a few days; he made some purposes of amendment, but they soon vanished amid the smoke of his greatness.

To comprehend the conduct of this prince, we have only to consider how easily many among ourselves, many children, many of the rich and noble, who yet have not built Babylon the great, allow their minds to be drawn off from that word which says to us continually, “Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy.” They have witnessed, perhaps, the death of some dear relative; they have followed the sad remains to the grave, have shed many tears, have felt something of the nothingness of all earthly things, have formed some pious resolutions; but soon these serious thoughts have vanished like the morning dew before the rising sun; all have disappeared amid the occupations and illusions of life. In many, our Lord tells us, the seed of the word springs up, but never ripens, because it is choked by thorns; and these thorns are of three kinds—1. “The deceitfulness of riches,” especially in the case of the aged.—2. “The cares of this world,” in those of riper years; and, 3. “The pleasures of this life,” in the young.

Such, then, was Nebuchadnezzar. I think

I see him on the terrace of his palace, or in his hanging gardens, surveying, with com-placent look, this magnificent city, and point-ing with his royal hand to these temples and other buildings which had risen at his com-mand, and saying, “Is not this the great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom?”

But hear! it is himself who relates it: “While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king, Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; thy kingdom is departed from thee,” &c. ver. 31.

These were the last words which the king of Babylon heard. From that moment his reason departed from him, and seven years passed over him as seven seconds. At the end of seven years he remembered these words; but from the moment they were uttered, he heard nothing; his brain was affected; his mind was gone; he became stupid, insen-sible, perhaps raging mad; it was necessary to exclude him from human society; he chose to go naked, as it often happens with mad-men; he lived in the open air; his body was wet with the dew of heaven; his hair was like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails like the claws of a bird of prey.

And here, my friends, again you will re-member what I said to you last Sunday. What hinders us from being reduced this day

to the same condition? what but the grace of God? Alas! it requires but little to bring us to it; a fall, a blow, a trifling hurt, a single drop of blood extravasated in the brain, any of these things are sufficient to deprive us of our memory, or of our reason, or of our will, or of all together. And have we not deserved, by the abuse which we have made of these noble faculties, that they should be taken from us, seeing that our Creator has only lent them to us, to be employed in his service, and for his glory?

But attend to the touching language of the king of Babylon, and admire the goodness of the Almighty to that great monarch. The Lord purposed to give him true reason, true wisdom, true understanding; and, behold! he is converted; behold! from the height of his throne he adores, magnifies and glorifies the true and living God! Hear his own words, ver. 34.

“At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes to heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.”

His counsellors recalled him; he was re-established on his throne, and his glory was even augmented.

EIGHTEENTH LESSON.

DANIEL v. 1—10.

WE are about to consider, verse by verse, this wonderful chapter. It is entirely devoted to the history of a single night; but what a solemn night! A night the most important, perhaps, in the annals of the world, not only on account of the great events which characterized it, but more especially because it was a prophetic type of the last solemn judgment of the Lord. It is the night on which the mighty Babylon fell, because “her sins had gone up to heaven, and the Lord had remembered her iniquities.” “Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in our time her judgment is come.” A night so great and so terrible, that the Holy Spirit frequently refers to it, as an emblem of that night a thousand times greater and more terrible, “when Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that fear not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But remark, in verse 1, how this night began in Babylon. It was to end with weeping and lamentations, with voices of terror

and cries of death ; but it began with mirth and laughter, with national rejoicings, shows, illuminations, festivities, splendid dress, and imperial pomp.

Let us read the first verse.

“ Belshazzar, the king, made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.”

This magnificent banquet, to which were invited a thousand guests, took place at night, in the sumptuous palaces of the king of Babylon, illuminated in the most splendid manner.

I told you something of the superb grandeur of those palaces last Sunday. Over the river Euphrates, which traversed the city from north to south, there was thrown a beautiful bridge 660 feet long, at the extremities of which stood two palaces, the one on the right, four miles in circuit, called the *Old Palace*; the other, on the left, still more extensive, called the *New Palace*. It was probably here, or on the terrace of the hanging gardens, on the bank of the river, that this royal banquet was given. It was the festival of the false gods of Babylon, a day which was celebrated every year; but on the present occasion it was purposed to keep it with more than usual pomp. Belshazzar had invited the most distinguished persons of his kingdom; and, contrary to all the rules of decorum which prevailed in the East, the

women of his harem, in all the splendour of dress and beauty, were present ; the joy was great ; they drank freely ; and the king himself, forgetting the dignity of his station, gave them the example of that sinful hilarity which wine excites. “ He drank,” we read in the first verse, “ before his thousand lords.”

Who, that saw this night begin with such gaiety and splendour, could have thought it would turn out one of the most disastrous and bloody in the records of nations ; that before the rising of the sun Babylon was doomed to fall ; the young king, his officers and attendants, to be slain with the sword ; and in these halls, where, a few hours before the wine flowed, human blood was to be poured out like water !

Alas ! my brethren, so it too often is with all the festivities of this world ; I mean not alone the impure joys of which wine is the promoter, but all, even the most innocent joys of this life, whether in the palace of kings, or in the cottage of the poor. The day begins with gaiety and thoughtlessness ; but who can tell how it shall end ? “ Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords.”

To understand this important chapter, it will be necessary for us to know who this Belshazzar was ; and what events took place between the last and the present chapter.

Belshazzar was properly not the son, but

the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar; and it was about twenty-three years and a half after the death of that prince, that the great feast in question took place. Nebuchadnezzar, you are aware, was deranged for seven years, that is, from 568 to 561 b. c. He died the year after, (560 b. c.) having reigned forty-six years. Evil Merodach, his son, who succeeded him, did not long occupy the throne; but during his reign, many of the countries which his father had conquered, and among others those of the Medes and Persians, acquired more or less independence. The son of the reigning king of Persia was a youth of great promise, and as his mother was daughter of the old king of the Medes, he was sent to the court of his grandfather, to finish his education. Thus Cyrus, from his youth, had gained the affections of the Medes as well as of the Persians, and was prepared one day to become the general and prince of both nations. He was associated in the command of the army with his maternal uncle, called in scripture *Darius the Mede*, and with him he made war against the king of Babylon. This latter prince being slain in battle, the hostile army came and laid siege to his magnificent capital.

I have already spoken to you of this wonderful city. How was it to be taken ! It was supplied with provisions for twenty years, had a numerous garrison within its walls,

and so strongly fortified that it seemed impregnable. Nevertheless, Cyrus and his uncle did not give up hope. They drew their armies round Babylon, dug deep trenches before the walls, and distributed their forces into twelve divisions, each to be employed for a month, in turn, on military duty ; no one was permitted either to enter or to leave the city, and when Belshazzar fell, they had already been engaged for three years in what seemed a fruitless and never-ending siege.

Meanwhile the Babylonians, enclosed within their walls, felt no uneasiness ; they laughed at the folly of their enemies, insulted them from their battlements, and it was, no doubt, to show how little he feared them, that the king gave his people that splendid banquet, of which we have read this day. Such, indeed, was their security, that they neglected to shut the massive gates which opened from the quays on the waters of the river.

But while the Babylonians were thus buried in thoughtlessness, king Cyrus was meditating a daring plan for the taking of the city, which I will tell you of in my next. But to proceed.

“ Belshazzar, whilst he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem ; that the king and the princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink there

in. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God, which was at Jerusalem ; and the king and the princes drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and of silver, and of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.”

Such are the effects of intemperance. It is especially amid the degrading excesses of the table, and under the influence of wine, that the heart of man discloses in the most open manner all the vile passions which dwell in it, pride, impurity, anger, cruelty, contempt of divine things, blasphemy, and all those pollutions which our Lord tells us come from within. Mark vii. 21 ; compare Luke xxi. 34—36 ; Prov. xx. 1 ; Isa. v. 11—13 ; Prov. xxxi. 4, 5.

It was at a feast which he gave to his court on his birth-day, that king Herod, who notwithstanding loved and revered the Baptist, being heated with wine, like Belshazzar, promised with an oath to give to the young Salome whatsoever she should ask. Instructed by her mother, she returns into the presence of these great lords, who, glass in hand, hail her appearance with exclamations of applause, and she demands of the king, “ Give me here John Baptist’s head in a charger.” “ The king,” we are told, “ was sorry : nevertheless, for his oath’s sake, and them that sat at meat with him, he com-

manded it to be given her.” And while they laughed and sung, and revelled, one of the soldiers on guard in the palace went out hastily, and proceeded into the dungeon where the Baptist lay. He enters, awakes the prophet, seizes him by the hair of his head, and severs his head from his shoulders. In a few moments a servant enters the festive hall with a new dish in his hands; he withdraws the napkin which covers it ; and, behold ! the head of the man of God, swimming in blood.

It is said that almost all those sanguinary conspiracies, which issued in such a frightful effusion of Protestant blood in France, were concocted at Blois, Bayonne, Paris, and Orleans, amid the festivities of the table, and in the society of the Salomes, and other immoral women, who constantly attended Catherine de Medicis, the Herodias of the French. You have all heard of the horrible St. Bartholomew’s Eve ; when, in a time of profound peace, without any previous warning, in one night, all the Protestants of France were surprised while sleeping in their beds, and treacherously murdered ; those who were found in the streets, endeavouring to escape, were thrown into the rivers ; and those who had made their way into the country were hunted and shot at like wild beasts. Thirty thousand were butchered in cold blood ; and the head of their leader, the venerable Co-

ligny, was carried to the queen mother, who, according to the French historians, Le Genetre, Matthieu, and S. de Serres, and the English Universal History, had it embalmed and sent to Rome. Now this horrible conspiracy was planned amid the festivities of a grand entertainment given in honour of a marriage in which the French court was concerned. Hence it is written, “ Be sober !”

But contemplate this unhappy Belshazzar and his guilty nobles. The court of Babylon had received a solemn lesson twenty-five years before, in the conversion and example of Nebuchadnezzar. There were, besides, in this city, thousands of believing Israelites, who worshipped the true and living God. Religion had revived among them; and the attention of many of the Chaldeans had been drawn to the word of God by the edicts of Nebuchadnezzar, the miracles of Daniel, and the wonderful deliverance of his three companions. At the same time ungodliness and irreligion reigned at the court of the young prince, and doubtless they were excited, as is generally the case, by the religious awakening which had lately taken place.

When, then, the prince and his numerous guests were heated with wine, they thought of sending for the vessels of gold taken from the temple at Jerusalem, and of making use of them in their orgies, as the greatest insult

they could offer to the God of the Hebrews, the new religion, as they called it, and all the mummeries which the old Nebuchadnezzar had sanctioned.

Immediately it is done. They are conveyed from the house of Bel, where the victors had deposited them ; and no sooner are they laid on the festive board than *the king, his lords, his wives, and his concubines*, to insult the true and living God, begin to drink out of the sacred vessels, and to offer their libations and praises to these “gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.”

But, hark ! a scream of terror escapes from king Belshazzar. What is the matter ! See how he changes colour and trembles, in the midst of his nobles and the women of his court ! The paleness of death is upon his countenance ; his wild-staring eye is fixed upon the wall, over against the candlestick ; he is no longer able to support himself ; the joints of his loins are loosed ; he faints, and his knees smite one against another ! What, then, has happened ? Why do his trembling hands continue stretched out convulsively towards that wall ? What is there ? Hear, I will tell you.

While this ungodly assembly were blaspheming God, and desecrating the vessels of his sanctuary ; while they were madly giving themselves up to every kind of excess, be-

hold ! the fingers of a man's hand were seen to come out upon the wall, just opposite where the king sat ! And these fingers did not go away ; they wrote ! "They wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace !" "And the king saw the part of the hand which wrote !" The longer he looked at it, the more his terror increased, "his countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." His conscience, at length awakened, agitated and tormented him, and, as it were, stirred up by the storms of the Most High, filled him with consternation.

At last he utters a loud cry—"The king cried with a loud voice to bring in the astrologers of Babylon ;" and as soon as they arrive, he says, "Whosoever of you shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, he shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom!"

Now judge what must have been the terror of that vast assembly ! The wise men arrive, but none of them can read the writing ; they no longer find their pretended inspirations, they are fixed to the spot, they are paralyzed with fear. Again, we are told, "the king is troubled ;" his distress is at its

height ; “ his countenance is changed, and his lords are astonished.”

At this moment, a person, who had taken no part in the proceedings of the night, made her appearance in the royal apartment. This was the queen mother, supposed to be the famous *Nitocris*, of whom history speaks with so much praise. She had heard, in her retirement, of her son’s distress, and came now to offer him counsel. She suggested to the king that he should immediately send for Daniel, whom she had formerly known, but who, for some time, had lived at a distance from court and public life.

My dear children, let not the details of this important history be obliterated from your recollections. Remember that there is in heaven a hand which registers all the actions of men, and all the events of time ; a hand more terrible than that which appeared to the king of Babylon ; a hand which writes down every day in the book of God’s remembrance, even the most secret thought of your hearts, to be referred to in the day of great account. Never lose sight of that hand and of that book ! And when you happen to fall into the society of those who would induce you to do what is wrong, when you are tempted to say, “ Doth God know? is there knowledge with the Almighty ? ” Oh ! let your eyes be directed to the wall, and remember Belshazzar ! Think of that hand

which writes in heaven, and which, if God so pleased, might this moment come forth on the wall, and trace, in mysterious characters before your eyes, your moral weight in the celestial balances. O yes, my friends, think of these things ! for soon the “ sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them ; and they shall be judged every man according to his works.” O my God, on that day let the blood of atonement be sprinkled upon all the pages of that awful book which concern me ! let it blot out the record of my sins traced by the hand of thine eternal justice and truth ! let nothing remain but the little good which I have been enabled to do by thy grace, through faith in my Saviour ; and even from that also, let that same blood wash away the evil which, alas ! is always mixed up, more or less, with everything I do !

One reflection more, my friends, upon this subject, and I have done.

The last day ! Oh ! how dreadful must that day appear to him who forms his judgment of it from this chapter of Daniel ! Mark the agitation, the distress of this mighty monarch ! Why this fear, this terror, this scream of anguish, this trembling of his limbs, this loosing of his loins, this smiting of his knees one against another ! He has seen——what ? Merely a hand, part of a hand, a silent, un-

armed hand, tracing words upon the plaster of the wall ! What, then, shall be the terrors of that day, when, at the sound of the archangel's voice, not this hand upon the wall, but the Son of man himself shall appear, coming in the clouds of heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon all that know not God ; when, not these four words shall be seen, but the book of remembrance ; not the wall of the palaces, but the great white throne, and He that sitteth thereon. And the dead, both small and great, shall stand before the throne ; and the books shall be opened ; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn and wail ; and they shall hide themselves in the caverns and rocks of the mountains, saying unto the rocks and mountains, " Fall on us and cover us from the presence of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the presence of the Lamb ! For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ? "

My God ! remember us in that terrible day ! Lord Jesus, have mercy upon us ! Thou, and thou only, canst deliver us from the wrath to come ! May we appear before thee without spot in that day ; having put our trust in thy blood, " may we not be ashamed before thee at thy coming ! "

NINETEENTH LESSON.

DANIEL v. 11—21.

WE witnessed, last Sunday, the first scenes of Belshazzar's feast, and I trust you have not forgotten them. The king was then in all the brilliancy of youth and regal splendour; the women of his court, in their richest and most magnificent attire; and all the estates of his kingdom. The guests, without counting the females, were a thousand in number.

Who can conceive the splendour of that night; the beauty of the gardens, the magnificence of the palaces, the appearance of that immense city illuminated by thousands of fires, and entirely given up to festivity; the great river Euphrates, which traversed it so majestically with its mighty navy floating between the banks; in a word, all the fascinations of that royal feast, the richness of the furniture, (for which the Chaldeans were so long renowned,) the splendour of the dresses, the beauty of the women, and the royal music.

But, alas! it was an ungodly joy, and they were graceless hearts that joined in it! Inebriating liquors flowed in abundance;

impurity and blasphemy were mingled with their strong drink ; and soon that unhallowed gaiety which wine inspires, those daring salutes which come from the cups, those audacious pleasantries in which the heart of man indulges when it is full, led this elegant but reckless company into the most revolting profanations, and the most horrible blasphemies. It is at such a moment, saith the Scripture, men set their mouth against heaven, insult God to his face, and sin with a high hand. “ Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning.”

At this feast of Belshazzar, as has happened at many of a more recent date, they ridiculed religious people, defied the true and living God, and laughed at things sacred and divine. And no doubt many a jest was passed on that despised people, who had been living among them for the last seventy years, and were now beginning to look forward to a promised deliverance.

Meanwhile the sacred vessels, plundered from the sanctuary of the Hebrews, are produced ; they receive the sparkling wine ; the royal guests quaff full bumpers from them in honour of their gods ; pour out libations to their idols ; and drink in, with the flowing liquors, iniquity, insolence, and blasphemy. But suddenly, on the plaster of the wall, over against the candlestick, the fingers of a

man's hand visibly appear, and write in solemn silence mysterious and unknown characters.

At this sight the countenance of the king turned pale ; his knees smote one against another ; despair was depicted in his looks ; he utters a cry of horror, and calls for the astrologers. They come ; but they are confounded and paralysed with fear ; the terror of the Lord seizes them. Upon this the agitation of the king increases ; he has no longer power over himself ; his countenance, lately beaming with youth, and lighted up with joy, becomes more disconcerted, and betrayed more than ever the terror which possessed his whole soul. Some suppose that his hair turned gray in a moment. At all events, the Holy Spirit twice notices this change in the form of his visage, and tells us that it inspired the guests with the greatest dread.

However, the reports of these events had reached the ears of the queen mother, the widow of Evil Merodach, the famous *Nitocris*. She comes to the palace, enters this scene of consternation, is received with marks of profound respect. Has she come to read herself the mysterious lines which have baffled the wise men of Babylon ! Shall she be able to explain this appalling prodigy ?

“ O king,” saith she, “ live for ever,” and let not thy countenance bear those marks of terror which are sufficient to fill all our hearts

with alarm ; “ there is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.”

It is with this last verse that our lecture this day commences. Let us dwell upon it for a moment, to admire the wisdom of God, who, in his own good time, brings about the accomplishment of all his eternal purposes. The dynasty must now change ; the kings of Babylon must fall for ever ; the head of gold must come to its end, and be succeeded by the breast and arms of silver, for so it is written. But when Darius the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian come to the throne, they must favour the people of God, and restore them to their own land. Therefore it is necessary for this humble prophet to be brought again into notice, that on the taking of Babylon every mouth may speak of him, and the king of the Medes may treat him with distinction, and place him at the head of his kingdom. It is for this reason that the hand appears on the wall, that Daniel may be sent for, and all who know him may have confidence in him.

Ah ! in the eyes of angels the great contest against Chaldea and its king was not carried on in the plains of Babylon ; or on the banks, or in the drained bed of the Euphrates. No ! it was rather in the chamber of the prophet, when that man of God, kneeling with his face towards Jerusalem, wrestled with the Lord in prayer for the deliverance

of his people. It was there was decided the fall of Belshazzar, and the overthrow of the Chaldean empire. Daniel and his brethren, no doubt, prayed for the restoration of Israel, and not for the destruction of their enemies ; but the Lord in hearing them, had fixed the following day for the punishment of Belshazzar, and the utter and perpetual desolation of the land of Chaldea. It was the eve of the day when it should be said, “ How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken ! A sword is upon the Chaldeans and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men ; and they shall be dismayed ; a sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her ; and they shall become as women ; a sword is upon her treasures, and they shall be robbed.” Jer. 1.

Daniel, indeed, whom we regarded a few weeks ago, when we considered the first chapter, but as a youth of fifteen or sixteen years of age, had passed his eighty-fifth year when he was sent for, at the suggestion of Nitocris. But since the death of Nebuchadnezzar, that is, for twenty-three years, he had lived at a distance from court, neglected and forgotten. He was regarded as a mere enthusiast, one of those drivelling Hebrew fanatics who had got round the old king and induced him to change his religion, and pro-

claim the vanquished god of the Jews, whom Babylon had made her captives and trampled under foot, to be the true God. And what, said no doubt the young Belshazzar, what were the consequences of all this to my grandfather? Why, that religion made him mad. Yes, foolish, inconsiderate Belshazzar! True, God took away from him his reason; but it was to humble him, to save him from a madness like thine, and to teach him that wisdom which cometh from above. See Prov. iii. 15, 16.

It was necessary, then, that when the seventy years' captivity of the Jews was about to expire, the attention of all the Medes and Persians, as well as the Chaldeans, should be directed to Daniel and the people of God. For this purpose the Lord gave up Belshazzar to his profane joy, and to the intoxication of his impiety; and on the very night on which he was to be cut off, and in the midst of the festivities of a public banquet, where were assembled all the principal men of his empire, he sent that mysterious handwriting, which was to lead to the introduction of the aged prophet, and to re-establish his reputation. The queen appears; she comes to name the only man in the kingdom who can explain these awful mysteries. This was Daniel; and I request you to remark the terms in which she expresses her own estimation of this man of God, and the reve-

rence which the great Nebuchadnezzar had entertained for him. "O king, there is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods." What more could she say in her heathen language? He is endowed with noble faculties and excellent virtues; he is more than a man; "the spirit of the holy gods is in him." The heathens believed in good and evil gods. In him was the spirit of the good gods.

Hear how she magnifies the genius of Daniel. "In the reign of thy father," (either Evil Merodach, who reigned only two years, or rather Nebuchadnezzar, who occupied the throne forty-five,) "light, and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; he interpreted dreams, and showed hard sayings and resolved doubts."

Hear again the homage which she pays to his virtues. "An excellent spirit was found in him." His heavenly disposition, his humility to God and man were acknowledged; in a word, the "spirit of the holy gods." Hence, adds she, "the king, thy father, that is, thy grandfather, whose steps, alas! thou hast not followed, made him master of all the magicians, soothsayers, and astrologers of his empire. Now, therefore, O king, let this Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation." Here we remark two things.

1. That Daniel, who had been known as

a great prince under the name of Belteshazzar, as soon as it was in his power, resumed his dearer Jewish name of *Daniel*; for, like Moses, “he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, counting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Chaldea.”

2. We see how soon the court of Babylon forgot the important services which the government of Daniel had rendered to the kingdom. His name is scarcely known; the old queen alone remembers him—such is the favour of the world! Wo unto them that labor for the approbation of men! They have their reward. Mat. vi. 2, 16.

Therefore, in all that we do, not only for the advancement of the kingdom of God, but also for the temporal benefit of our fellow-men, we must look away from man and direct our eyes to Jesus alone; we must, in a manner, forget what we have done; “our left hand must not know what our right hand doeth;” otherwise we shall have our reward in this world; for the Lord holds in abhorrence what is done with a double view, with an eye to him and an eye to the world—and this miserable reward of earth will profit us nothing. Those whose esteem we value most will soon leave us; and even if they do not, they are changeable and ungrateful; they may soon forget us. Happy for Daniel, that

he acted not from worldly motives ; for now he is old and forgotten ; Nitocris alone remembers him, and seems to know that there is such a being in existence.

Thus, in the year 1538, when our fore-fathers, in a moment of folly and ingratitude, into which they were betrayed by evil disposed persons, expelled the celebrated John Calvin from Geneva, that man of God, being informed of the decree of the general council, calmly replied, “ Well ! had I served man here, I might complain of my reward ; but happily I have laboured for a master who never forgets, and is never ungrateful.” And what was the result ? One day, while the worthy minister, James Bernard, was preaching at Rive, “ Seeing,” as he tells us himself, “ the congregation in the deepest affliction, and all the people melted into tears, he could not refrain from exhorting them to turn with their hearts to the Lord, and in reliance on the blood of Jesus Christ, the Pastor of pastors, to supplicate him to give to his church a spiritual guide.” The people did so accordingly with great devotion. The very next day the council of five hundred assembled and demanded Calvin. The third day the general assembly met, and all the people cried out, “ Calvin, Calvin ! We want Calvin, that good and learned man, and faithful minister of Jesus Christ !” Hence the excellent Bernard, writing to him at Strasburg,

to entreat him to yield to the wishes of the people, says: "O, how I rejoice to see that it is through the influence of the Spirit of God that the people now a second time recognise you as a good and faithful pastor! Delay not, therefore, venerable father in Christ Jesus, delay not to come and see Geneva, that is, a new people, renewed by the grace of God."

Yes, my dear children, do all for Jesus Christ; for while men remember not the trouble which you take for them, Jesus forgets nothing; yea, he even tells us that in the last day a cup of cold water given in his name shall not lose its reward. Forget nothing, do I say, O, my God! Ah! while thou rememberest the cup of cold water, thou forgettest, for the sake of thy Son, the frightful catalogue of our sins! Mat. xxv. 34—40.

But let us now proceed to the fourth act of this great drama, for the history of this famous night presents, as it were, the successive acts of an imposing tragedy.

First act, a magnificent banquet, joy, splendour, beautiful dresses, delightful singing, enchanting music.

The second act opens like a flash of lightning. Behold a hand, silent and terrible, comes out upon the wall, and writes: *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.* The king is seized with horror—he utters a piercing cry—his

limbs tremble—his countenance is changed—his eyes are fixed—he demands the wise men. They arrive, the same terror seizes them likewise, the whole assembly is thrown into the same inexpressible anguish.

Third act. The queen enters; all is silence; she demands Daniel.

Fourth act. Daniel arrives! What a moment; the entrance of this aged prophet into the midst of this assembled court! There are still there all the women of the harem, in their extravagant attire; but, also, there are there the festive tables; the unhallowed remains of a royal debauch; the golden vessels of the temple of Jerusalem, still full of the wine of their impure libations; the lamps, which, amid all the splendours and all the abominations of that palace, beam upon a thousand countenances of men, with terror depicted in every feature, upon all these weeping women, and upon the king himself, lately so joyous and so proud, but now trembling—gasping for breath—dejected. But remember that all this took place beneath the porticos of the palace, or on the terraces by the great river Euphrates, that traversed the city, between two immense quays, which separated the royal residences. Night reigned over the universe; the stars, in silence, pursued their courses in the heavens; and on earth, in the camp of the Medes and Persians, without the walls of Babylon, not a

sound was heard ; the hostile army appeared more silent and more tranquil than ever ; it seemed as if it had disappeared.

And now Daniel approaches the king ; he is an old man, grown gray with years : at first the presence of the prophet seems to awaken the proud contempt of Belshazzar, and his hatred of the people of God. At least he reminds him, in his first question, that he is only a captive and a slave : “ Art thou that Daniel which art of the children of the captivity, whom the king, my father, brought out of Jewry ? ” ver. 13. Seventy years had elapsed since the commencement of that captivity, and he had not forgotten it ; but it was a much shorter time since Daniel had rendered the most important services to the Babylonian monarchy, and he had forgotten them all : “ I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee ; and that light, and understanding, and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof ; but they could not show the interpretation of the thing. And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts ; now, if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of

gold about thy neck, and thou shalt be third ruler in the kingdom."

The sovereigns of Europe think they confer happiness upon a man when they grant him a red or blue riband, to be worn at the button-hole. In China, it is a tassel in the cap. Among the Turks, it is the tail of a fox, or of a horse, which, if I mistake not, is worn behind the turban. In the time of Louis XIV., there were those who died of grief, because they could not obtain permission to wear a certain little vest, with certain little buttons, of a certain form. And in the days of Napoleon, how many rushed into the jaws of death, that they might be privileged to wear a little red riband, with a little medal of gold enamel, of the form of a star, suspended from their button hole, like that which the children of our schools wear when they reach the first form. "This they do," saith St. Paul, "to obtain a corruptible crown."

But hear the answer of Daniel, with which we shall conclude our present lecture. He draws near to the young king. He had witnessed, for the last seventy years, all the revolutions of the kingdom; he had lived forty-five years with Nebuchadnezzar—his grandfather. Hence he speaks to him with respect as a subject, but at the same time with the authority of an old man, and a prophet of the Lord.

Hear him. He begins by refusing the proffered gifts of the king. He is no mercenary ; he is a servant of God ; he has reached the close of his career ; what are these toys to him ? The end of the Babylonian empire is at hand ; what can these honours profit him ? He is indignant at the impiety of the young king, and will accept of nothing from him ; but he expresses himself with reserve, though with a respectful severity. He has never sought either silver or gold : “Let thy gifts be to thyself, O king.” Ah ! did we too consider the nearness of our latter end, we would have the same indifference, the same contempt for the gifts of this world. We would say to it, “Let thy gifts be to thyself, O world ! give them to others ! this night thou shalt perish ; but I belong to that God who abideth for ever ; and I have in heaven ‘a better and more enduring substance.’”

After this refusal, Daniel enters upon his subject. He begins by referring to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the latter years of which had been despised, because they were pious. This is not a vain discourse ; it is a necessary part of the interpretation which he had to give. He describes the high degree of glory, power, and honour to which the Lord had exalted his father. “The Most High gave him a kingdom, majesty, and glory ; and all people, nations, and languages trembled and

feared before him !” Indeed, never had any heathen prince risen to such a pitch of glory, and Daniel takes care to tell his successor to so much power that it was *God* who *gave* it to him ; it was not his genius, nor his prowess, nor his courage, nor his skill, which doubtless were great ; it was the Most High God, the God of gods, as Nebuchadnezzar himself called him.

“ All people, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him.” His genius and his power subjugated every enemy before he struck a blow—nothing was able to resist him. Even kings kneeled to him for life, and held it of him. In his empire his nobles had no voice ; he had power of life and death over them all. Happy are we not to live under such a government ; and we ought to feel it. Millions would give all they possess for the privileges which we enjoy in this republic.

“ But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne.” Such is the effect of pride ; it hardens the heart against the command of God and against his judgments ; it hinders conversion.

“ He was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him ; and he was driven from the sons of men ; and his heart was made like the beasts ; and his dwelling was with the wild asses ; they fed

him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven ; till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."

" And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this."

With these words let us terminate our lesson of to-day ; and reserve, until next Sunday, the remainder of Daniel's address.

But before concluding, observe that on this last night of Belshazzar's life, the prophet stands forth before him like another conscience, reminding him from God of the examples, the light, the mercies, the assistances which had been afforded him, but which he had so grievously abused and refused to acknowledge. O think what a punishment, what a source of bitter agony will this voice of remembrance be to the ungodly in the last day, when, alas ! too late, it shall make itself heard, and bring to their souls nothing but unavailing regret and eternal reproaches. How will the recollection of so much grace despised, so many privileges neglected, so many opportunities unimproved, fill them with unceasing anguish, and, like the gnawing of a never-dying worm, prey on their inward consciousness, when the last hour has tolled, and time shall be no longer ; when all shall have fled for ever, and the riches of

forbearance shall have been exhausted. Ah ! defer not, then, my friends, defer not to think of your advantages until that day when you shall be separated from them, and they from you ! When your trial shall be ended, ended for ever ! What other torments, what other avenger besides memory, will be wanted to perpetuate in hell the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth of the lost ? Ah ! this is the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched ; frightful, interminable punishment ! My God ! a thousand times I might have laid hold on eternal life, and I have chosen death ! How often has my Saviour stood knocking at my door, and cried : Open unto me ; my child, give me thine heart ; besides me there is no other Saviour ; open unto me ! and I would not, and he has gone away, and he will no more return ! and now it is too late ! "My son," said Abraham to the rich worldling in torments, "my son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things—remember !" Then will conscience stand forth before thee, like Daniel before the king of Babylon : "Thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this !" Remember !—remember, young woman, the tears with which thy pious parents besought thee to come to Christ, and thou hast seen them flow unmoved ! Remember, young man, that death which visited thy father's

house, and those examples which the Almighty has placed before thine eyes ! Those solemn scenes of affliction he introduced into thy family to bring thee to himself ! Thou hast seen death on the countenance of a brother, a sister, an uncle, a parent, who had besought thee to give thyself to Christ ! Like Belshazzar, thou hast witnessed conversions in thy family ! And what hast thou done ? Thou hast not humbled thine heart ! Read Prov. i. 20—33.

TWENTIETH LESSON.

DANIEL V. 22—31.

IN the verses of this day, we have one of the most important events in history. I wish you to understand it thoroughly, my dear children, not only that you may derive from this chapter all the edification which it is capable of affording you, but further, that you may be enabled to read with more intelligence and with more profit other prophetic scriptures relating to the same subject, whether in Daniel himself, in Ezekiel, in Isaiah, (ch. xiii. xiv. xxi. xliv. xlvi. xlvii.) or in Jeremiah (xxv. l. li.)

To those who have not taken the trouble of studying the scripture history to which they refer, these sacred pages may be obscure ; but, as I have before said, they shine with light and beauty to the peasant, or to the child who reads them in connexion with the contemporary history of these men of God.

Yes, I repeat it ; if the books of the prophets are obscure to Christians of the present day, they are themselves in fault. The majority forget that *one-half of the scriptures is prophetic* ; they read them with an irre-

verent and almost unbelieving negligence ; and without reflecting that they were written for their instruction also, and for the confirmation and strengthening of their faith. They are more desirous of finding their own views and ideas in them, than of discovering those of God, seeking a vague, loose, and almost mystic edification in them, and sometimes going so far as to say : “ I do not like the prophets ; they are unintelligible to me ; I have no taste for them.” Lord ! pardon even the best of us the irreverence of our thoughts ! Is it not thou that hast spoken ? Did not Jesus Christ himself continually appeal to Moses and the *prophets* ? Has he not caused it to be written in the very first page of the prophecies of the New Testament : “ Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the prophecy of this book,” Rev. i. 3 ; and in the last : “ I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book ? ”

Ah ! my dear children, our fathers, in the days of the blessed reformation, did not cherish such foolish thoughts about the word of

God. Though people were then less enlightened in worldly knowledge than at present, yet did even children and artisans devote themselves to the study of the Old Testament prophecies. And it was these wonderful predictions concerning Babylon and the man of sin, that supported the greater part of our reformers and martyrs, in their long and painful conflicts. I purchased, for example, at Geneva, some years ago, two commentaries, by Calvin, in old French, one on Jeremiah, another on Isaiah and Ezekiel. The names of the original possessors are still legible on the inside of the cover. On one of the volumes is written, “This book is mine, *sayettein*,” (a name given to weavers of small woollen stuffs;) and on another, “My book, Master Rolet, wool-carder, Pelisserie;” and the date, 1614, leads us back nearly to the time of the escalade, 1602. Such were our tradesmen at the time when God, by his merciful arm, delivered us from all our enemies, and for two hundred years preserved us as an oasis of truth and reformation in the midst of the desert.

But let us return to Daniel, and let us begin by referring to the contemporary history. I shall ask you a few questions on the subject.

Who reigned in Babylon at this time? Whose grandson was he? What year before Christ did Nebuchadnezzar begin to reign?

What age was Daniel when he went to Babylon? How old was he when he appeared at Belshazzar's feast? How often did Nebuchadnezzar take Jerusalem? Whom did he appoint king of the Jews after the taking of that city? What did he do at the end of the third siege?

He burned the city and temple of Jerusalem.

Yes; he carried off the sacred vessels; killed all the children of the king in his presence; and removed him to Babylon, loaded with chains, having previously caused his eyes to be put out.

How long did this captivity of the Jews last? Seventy years. By whom was this predicted? By Jeremiah, chapters xxv. xxvii. and xxix. Who were the three prophets whom the Lord raised up at this time to improve this chastisement to the people, and to predict its duration; and when did they respectively prophecy?

Now, dear children, it is important for you to know that when the aged Daniel appeared before the king of Babylon, amid the confusion of his festive entertainment, to explain the mysterious handwriting on the wall, he was acquainted with the predictions which Jeremiah had delivered fifty-six years before. Jeremiah, doubtless, was already dead ten or twelve years; for he was twenty-eight years older than Daniel, while Ezekiel was his

senior only by four or five years. I want you to read two or three predictions of those great servants of God before we go further: 1st. Because this will enable you better to perceive the excellence of these prophetic pages, when compared with history; and, 2dly, it will also throw light upon the events of our lessons to-day.

And first read Daniel ix. 1—3. From this passage we learn three things.

1. That though Daniel was one of the greatest of the prophets of the Lord, yet he studied with reverence the writings of his contemporary Jeremiah. It was not Jeremiah that he studied, it was God; and I will presently show you something still more striking in Daniel himself; you shall see him, after having written his twelfth chapter, studying, as it were upon his knees, his own words, that is, the words which God had put into his mouth, for "all the prophets," as St. Peter tells us, "searched what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify," 1 Pet. i. 11.

2. Daniel had read in Jeremiah that the captivity was to last seventy years. It began in the year 606 b. c., it was consequently to end in the year 536.

3. This study had the effect of stirring up Daniel to fervent prayer.

Let us next read Jeremiah xxix. 1—15. From these verses we learn, that the year

before the accession of king Zedekiah, that is, in the year 598, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem the second time, that holy man wrote a letter of consolation from Jerusalem to his brethren, urging them to submit to their lot as a just judgment from the Lord, and foretelling, that after seventy years, their children should be delivered and restored to Jerusalem. This, no doubt, was one of the chapters of Jeremiah, which the venerable Daniel, sixty-three years after, read and pondered over in Babylon, and by which he was led to pour out his heart before the Lord in fervent prayer for his people.

The next chapter to which I would direct your attention is the fifty-first ; it is one of those in which the prophet predicted, fifty-six years before the event, the sudden and terrible downfall of Babylon. You will perceive, from the last verses, that he wrote this wonderful prediction while Jerusalem was yet standing, in the fourth year of king Zedekiah, that is, 594 b. c. Read the chapter, Jeremiah li. and compare xxv. l. and Isaiah xiii. xiv.

We have here a most exact description of the manner in which this great city was to fall. In the middle of the night, while the whole city was plunged in security, and given up to rejoicings, Cyrus, with his terrible archery, was to enter by the bed of the Euphrates, having previously turned the

course of its waters ; the gates of the quays, which, as we said, ran along the river on both sides, were to be left open through neglect all that night ; and the whole Persian army, entering the city on foot and on horseback, were to set fire to the Babylonian fleet ; to put to the sword all the armed men ; and to slay in his palace the king, his captains, his wise men, and his magistrates. "For I will make them drunken," saith the Lord, "that they may sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake." The enemies of Babylon were "to fill it with men as with caterpillars :" "the slain were to fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they were thrust through in her streets ; because her judgment reached unto the heavens, and was lifted up even unto the skies ;" they were to set up a standard upon the walls, to make the watch strong, to set up the watchmen, and to prepare ambushes ; such were to be the terror and consternation of this mighty city, that the men were to give up fighting ; they were "to become as women," and to allow themselves to be slain as sheep for the slaughter ; and while Belshazzar was still in his palace with his women, his officers, and his thousand lords, suddenly he was to be told, "Behold the Medes !" they are in the city, we are lost ! "One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is

taken at one end,"' verses 31, 32 ; and how ? "the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire ;" for the Medes were immediately to set fire to the ships stationed along the quays, and "the men of war were to be affrighted."

When Daniel appeared, in the middle of the night, before the king of Babylon, he had read, like us, this chapter of Jeremiah ; but, moreover, he had the Spirit of God enabling him to interpret to the unhappy monarch the handwriting on the wall. We left off last Sunday at the commencement of the prophet's answer to the king.

The officers of Belshazzar had come, at midnight, to his house to seek him ; the old man had risen from his bed : What is the matter ? What do they want with me ? no doubt he exclaimed ! The king calls for thee ; the whole court awaits thee ; the queen Nitocris has spoken of thee. But are they not plunged to-night in riot and debauchery ? I have even heard that they have sent for the sacred vessels in the temple of Bel, to outrage my God : What, then, do they want with me ? Do they seek my life ? No ! the king is in great consternation. He was feasting, it is true, in the midst of his women, and of his thousand lords ; but while the wine flowed in abundance, while they were drinking, and pouring out libations to their idols, from the vessels which served, seventy years

ago, in the temple of thy God, behold ! there appeared upon the wall, opposite to where the king sat, the fingers of a man's hand, which wrote in silence upon the plaster mysterious characters. Immediately the king uttered a scream of horror—his limbs refused to bear him—his knees smote one against another, but what terrified us most of all—his countenance, bearing marks of despair, is horribly changed. The wise men have been sent for in vain ; they can tell nothing. Finally, the queen mother made her appearance, and counselled the king to send for thee. "There is a man," said she, "in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods ; it is Daniel." Come, then ; rise up, and delay not to follow me.

The aged prophet sets out without delay, and takes the way to the palace. As quickly as his advanced age permitted, he traversed the vast streets of Babylon ; the night was tranquil ; the people, still ignorant of what had passed, were enjoying themselves in their houses ; but in heaven the stars pursued in silence their nightly courses ; one would have supposed that the countless, tumultuous squadrons of the Medes and Persians had retired, and that their cruel archers had withdrawn.

The prophet enters the presence of the king : the thousand lords are there—the women of the court—the golden vessels of the

temple, full of wine !—but opposite the king, on the wall, are visible the miraculous words which none have been able to comprehend; and perhaps, too, the terrible hand is still seen. The whole assembly await, with breathless attention, the words of the old man.

“ O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour ; but when his heart was lifted up, *and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne*, and they took his glory from him ; he became deranged, and was driven from among men till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will !”

And now here our verses for to-day begin.

“ And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.” Such is the first rebuke which the prophet, as a minister of God, addresses to the king in presence of his court : *he did not humble his heart, though he knew all the history of Nebuchadnezzar his father.* Here we see what is most offensive in the sight of the Almighty—the pride of the creature. “ The proud,” saith David, “ shall not stand before thee ; but thou, Lord, savest the humble people.” “ God resisteth the proud,”

saith St. James, “but giveth grace to the humble.” “Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud—yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts!” Mal. iv. 1.

But think, my dear children, if God so severely punished pride in a heathen, with how much greater rigour will he visit the same fault in a Christian; if he was grievously offended at the pride of the king of Babylon, how much more will he be offended at pride in one of you! But of all the sins of which the sinner can be guilty, that which provokes him most is a haughty indifference under the visitations of his judgments; insensibility to the chastisements of his justice, such as some sudden death—some solemn event—some attack of illness, which seemed mortal. But let us hear Daniel.

“Thou hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, &c., have drunk wine in themand thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know.” Such is the second crime of Belshazzar.

In a word, “thou hast not glorified the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways.” Behold the whole sin of

this unhappy prince summed up in a few words ! and this, my brethren, shall be the condemnation of all the unconverted in the last day. “ Their breath is in the Lord’s hand,”—not a beat of their heart—not a respiration of their lungs—not a hair of their heads, that they do not hold from him ; “ their ways,” also, “ are in his hand ;” wherever they go, they are under his eye ; they are dependent on him every moment, by day and by night ; if they go up to heaven, he is there ; if they make their bed in hell, behold he is there also ; if they take the wings of the morning, and flee unto the uttermost parts of the sea, he is there, and his right hand shall hold them.

What, then, in the estimation of reason and of common gratitude, is the duty of such creatures ? What is their safety, their glory, their privilege, and their happiness ? Ah ! is it not to honour, serve, follow, fear, and love him “ in whose hand is their breath, and whose are all their ways ? ” And herein, we may observe, consists the sin of all children, until they be converted to God, by the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that they do not glorify their Creator ; they live unto themselves ; they think only of themselves. In the morning, when they rise up, their thoughts are only about themselves ; in the evening, when they lie down, their solicitudes are confined to the same object. But the child who has

received Christ Jesus into his heart, knows that he is not his own; desires, above all things, to glorify him who so loved him; feels an anxious wish to serve him, and says from his heart, “Our father, our father, hallowed be thy name!” Like David in the ciii. Psalm, he exclaims, “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!”

Such was the sin of Belshazzar; he glorified not God; therefore, being weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, “he was found wanting.” And thus, in the day of judgment, shall every child be weighed in the same balance who has lived in this world only for himself.

“Then,” adds the prophet, “the part of the hand was sent from him,” (from God, in whose hand is thy breath and all thy ways,) “and this writing was written.”

Ver. 25. “And this is the writing that was written.”

It would appear that even the letters in which this writing was written, were unknown to the Chaldeans. Some suppose them to have been the old Hebrew characters, like those of the Samaritans in the present day, with which the Babylonians were not acquainted. The Hebrew and Chaldee languages formed two dialects, nearly approaching one another, like the English and

Danish, Dutch and German, &c. These awful words were as follows:—

“ Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.”

Each of these words appears to have had two significations, one in Hebrew, another somewhat different in Chaldee; so that they became equivalent to six sentences, six terrible sentences.

Mene: in Hebrew, under a Chaldee form, *he hath numbered*: in Chaldee, *he hath finished*.

Tekel: in Chaldee, *he hath weighed*: in Hebrew, *thou art found wanting*!

Upharsin: *U* means, *and*; *Pharsin*, or *Parsin*, in every language, means the *Persians*; but it is also the Chaldee present participle plural of a Hebrew and Chaldee word which signifies to *divide*.

Hence these three short words, the first of which, for the sake of emphasis is repeated, mean:

Mene, Mene. God hath numbered thy kingdom, God hath numbered thy kingdom; and he hath put an end to it, he hath put an end to it!

Tekel. *Thou art weighed* in the balance and found wanting.

Upharsin: and thy kingdom shall be divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

It might have been feared that the king, incensed against the aged prophet, would commit some act of violence, some outrage

upon his hoary locks. But no ; he is depressed, he is cast down. He confers upon Daniel the promised reward. Daniel had too much respect for the unhappy prince, who besides was his sovereign, unkindly to reject his favours ; but he knew what value to attach to them. The fashion of this kingdom was passing away ; and as the Christian is commanded to do with the things of this world, “he used them as though he used them not.” He allowed the chain to be placed about his neck, and the scarlet robe to be put on his person. But what were the favours of the king of Babylon to him ? That same night he was to perish by the sword of the Medes ! “A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the Lord, and upon his princes, and upon his wise men.” That night, which began in rioting and blasphemy, was to end in terror and in blood !

I shall now tell you what happened.

All that the prophet had predicted was fulfilled to the letter in its minutest details. Did time allow me to enter at large into the subject, and to relate the respective accounts of the Greek historian Herodotus, and of the general Xenophon, who lived 200 years after Cyrus, you would see with admiration what a perfect accordance there is between the prophets and the historians, as to the great scenes of this wonderful transaction.

The kings of Media and Persia being con-

federate against Babylon, entrusted the command of their armies to Cyrus the Great, according to the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Isa. xxi. 2. Jer. li. 11. The taking of this city, however, according to the prophecies, was not to be the work of the Medes and Persians alone, as we read, Jer. li. 27. "Set up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat (Upper Armenia) Minni (Lower Armenia) and Ashchenaz," (Phrygia.)

Hence we find that Cyrus, having subdued the two Armenia's, and gained their affection by his generosity, did not fear to incorporate their armies with his own. He induced the Hyrcanians to renounce their alliance with Babylon in favour of him, subdued the powerful Lydia, also Phrygia and Cappadocia, and enrolled their soldiers under his banner. In a word, Xenophon informs us, that by his noble conduct and mild government, he turned into a confederacy against Babylon a formidable coalition of powerful nations, which had existed against himself.

As soon as this great commander arrived at Babylon, he drew up his army around it, and made the circuit of it on horseback, with his numerous staff, to ascertain if its immense circumference presented any point of

attack; but he was completely disappointed: those astonishing walls and entrenchments which seemed, say the historians, more like a bulwark of nature than a work of man, bid defiance to all assault. What was to be done? To blockade this vast city, and make its multitudes the means of its ruin; to starve it into submission. Cyrus, fearing lest the sallies of the Chaldeans should compromise the safety of his army, presenting such an extended front around the walls, began by ordering it to take up a new position, which the historian Xenophon, himself one of the ablest generals of his day, speaks of with the greatest admiration. He next directed them to dig a deep trench round the city, and to erect towers, for the purpose of repelling the assaults of the enemy. The whole army was then formed into twelve divisions, each to defend in turn these stupendous circumvallations.

Babylon had hitherto been in the hands of God, "the hammer of the whole earth, to break in pieces the nations, and to destroy kingdoms; they were terrible and dreadful," Hab. i. 7. their horses were swifter than leopards, and their sight, one would have said, more quick than that of the evening wolf; their horsemen spread themselves, they flew like the eagle hastening to the prey; they scoffed at kings; princes were a scorn unto them; they derided every strong hold.

But now they are shut up within these walls, their horses stand in their stables, they have lost their wings ; their horsemen walk about in the streets ; they are become as women. Seeing the hostile army drawn up around their walls, their courage failed, and they posted themselves behind their stupendous ramparts, where the arrows of the enemy could not reach them. Their prince, to whom Cyrus proposed to decide the contest by single combat, dared not accept the challenge ; his hands had waxed feeble, and anguish had taken hold of him ; their gates of brass remained shut day and night ; nor did they even venture to attack the lines of the enemy, weakened by the length to which they were drawn out in surrounding the city. In a word, historians are astonished at their timidity, which so strikingly contrasts with their former bravery ; but this, too, was a subject of prophecy, Jer. li. 30.

For more than two years, Cyrus cherished the hope of reducing the besieged by famine ; but this expectation must have been altogether abandoned, when he was assured that Babylon contained within its walls fields of surprising fertility, besides provisions for twenty years. Hence the inhabitants laughed at the patience of the Persians, and insulted them from their ramparts.

Thus two years of blockade and of incredible labours seemed to be entirely thrown

away ; the army began to grow impatient ; they imagined the city impregnable ; their hopes were encouraged by no successes, and the anxiety of their prince increased daily, when, from the report of two deserters, he conceived an idea at once the most novel and the most adventurous. This was to enter Babylon by the bed of that very river Euphrates, which seemed to constitute its strength. Cyrus then resolved to drain off the waters of the river into the broad deep trenches which he had caused to be dug on each side of it. This might have appeared a task as rash as it was laborious. The river was 1200 feet wide, and twelve feet mean depth ; and one of Cyrus' wisest counsellors assured him, that he would find Babylon better defended by its enormous quays than by its outer walls. He was not, however, to be dissuaded ; the trenching was carried on without interruption, under his own inspection ; and friends and enemies were both left under the impression that these gigantic labours were intended to cut off all communication with Babylon from without ; and thus to starve the inhabitants. "Had the besieged suspected the designs of Cyrus," says Herodotus, "or had they even discovered them before their accomplishment, the army of Cyrus was undone ;" they had only to close the gates of the quay walls, and the Persians would have been taken, as it were,

in an ambuscade, without the possibility of an escape. Hence, to guard against such a danger, Cyrus took care to choose for the execution of his plans, the night of their great feast, when all the people were accustomed to indulge in the most unbounded excesses. No sooner had that long wished-for night commenced, than the dykes were opened, and the river allowed to rush with impetuosity into the deep channels which had been formed for it. The waters sunk in their ancient bed, and immediately the Persians, amid the universal silence, poured into it their innumerable forces. The Lord had said, "A draught is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up," Jer. l. 38. "I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry," li. 36. The Chaldeans were taken by surprise; but such was the vastness of Babylon, says Herodotus, that those who lived at one end of it were taken and slain, before the alarm had reached the centre. Not one of its hundred brazen gates had been forced; not a brick displaced in its immense walls; and yet Babylon the Great was filled with enemies as numerous as the locusts which darken the sun and cover the fields, when the wind of the desert drives them before it. Thus was accomplished that word of Jehovah, "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed. How is Sheshach (Chaldea) taken!"

and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised," &c. See Jeremiah li. 8; 41, 42, 43.

At the approach of night, Cyrus had addressed his troops. "Those of the enemy," said he, "who are not intoxicated, are asleep, and Babylon is all in confusion." As soon as the Persians got into the city, they slew the most vigilant of the soldiers stationed near the gates, pursued others from street to street; and in some places, even joining the grotesque crowds of masqueraders which they met, as if the work of murder was only one of the pastimes of that night, they hastened to gain the imperial palace by the shortest road. They arrived there before the messengers, who had been sent to announce to the king of Babylon that the city was taken at one end. "Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the Lord," Jer. i. 53. The gates of the palace, which alone formed a powerful fortress in the midst of the city, were shut, it is true; but the guard, placed there to defend it, were occupied in drinking round a fire which they had kindled in the public square. Suddenly a panic-struck multitude rushes in upon them; the Persians, sword in hand, are in the midst of them; cries of terror and de-

spair rend the heavens ; they no longer resemble shouts of merriment, they reach the palace, they are heard in the halls and saloons of that royal abode. It was only there that the prince and his nobles, by the light of that fire which the guard had kindled, beheld a scene of tumult and carnage which they were utterly unable to explain.

On seeing this, the king, who imagined it only to be a drunken fray, ordered his guards immediately to go and repress it, and to punish the refractory. They open the folding gates of the palace, and immediately the Persians rush in. In a moment the king, the princes, the governors, the officers, the captains, and the whole of that multitude, pass at once from the arms of intoxication into the arms of death. “ I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, and her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men ; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the king, whose name is the Lord of Hosts. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he-goats.” Jer. li. 57, 40.

Cyrus, Xenophon tells us, sent troops of cavalry to scour the streets, and to put to the sword every one whom they met. At the same time he caused a proclamation to be read in different parts of the city, in the Syriac or Chaldee language, commanding all

the inhabitants to remain in their houses on pain of being put to death without mercy. Thus were accomplished the words of Jeremiah the prophet. "A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans," li. 54. See also 3, 4; l. 42.

The city being taken, and the fleet burned in the drained bed of the Euphrates, Cyrus held a review of his cavalry before the whole population of Babylon, in the streets and squares of the city. Four thousand horse of the royal guard were stationed before the gates of the palace, and 2000 on either side. As soon as he appeared, they marched before him, followed by 2000 lancers. After these picked regiments, four great divisions advanced, each of 10,000 horse; and in the rear of these formidable squadrons marched in beautiful order, first, the cavalry of the Medes, then that of the Syrians, Hyrcanians, and others. Lastly, 2000 war chariots, four abreast, closed this imposing march. Some time after, Cyrus held a review of his whole army in Babylon. It consisted, say the historians, of 120,000 horse and 600,000 foot.

Thus fell Babylon, the scourge of the nations, the hammer of the whole earth, the proud, cruel, impregnable city, which hitherto had never seen within its walls other enemies but the vanquished and the captive.

Contrary to all expectation, it was taken; and the day after the riotous festival of its gods, it was filled with a conquering host, more numerous than the locusts of the desert, which seemed to have come down into it as it were on wings.

T W E N T Y - F I R S T L E S S O N .

DANIEL vi. 1—10.

WHAT a grand, what an affecting subject we are called to meditate on this day ! what a beautiful counterpart does it form to that which is presented to us in the first chapter ! There we have the faithfulness of Daniel, a youth of fourteen ; here we have the faithfulness of the same Daniel, an old man with hoary locks. May you, my friends, like him, be found faithful in the morning of your days ; for then, the Lord hath sworn, and he will surely keep his word, then you shall be faithful in the evening of life, at the hour of rest, when you are about to go down beneath the horizon of this world, to rise on the other side, radiant with glory, in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The scriptures compare the course of the righteous to that of the glorious orb of day. “The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day,” Prov. iv. 18. Such was the career of the blessed Daniel. One loves to contemplate his youth and his old age together ; it does one good.

It is a beautiful sight to behold the rising sun, on a fine fresh morning, appearing above the peaks of our Alps, and diffusing his golden rays through the expanse of heaven, till every object from one horizon to the other is illumined by his light. But not less beautiful is it to behold that same bright luminary, when, after a day of clear sunshine, he finishes his career behind the Jura, tinging the sky with his last hues, and seems to descend beneath the earth, to illumine, in other climes, the empires of the west, the plains of Peru, and the verdant isles of the ocean.

Consider this royal youth, the beloved Daniel, so beautiful in countenance, and so full of the Spirit of God : he leaves Jerusalem in chains, and under the conduct of a Chaldean general ; but in heart devoted to his God and Saviour, and sincerely desirous to glorify him. He is the sun of holiness and happiness rising upon Chaldea.

And now contemplate this same Daniel with hoary locks before his window in Babylon. He is eighty-five years of age ; three times a day he enters his chamber, and before that open window, which looks towards Jerusalem, he kneels down, and stretching forth his hands towards the holy city, he prays and gives thanks to his God. He has heard of the king's letter ; and he knows of the den of lions ; but he serves the King of

kings, and his heart is full of love, peace, and joy. O what a beautiful setting !

Well, then, my friends, happy the child that begins his life, like Daniel, with faithfulness ; happy, thrice happy the man who ends it, like him, with obedience, with prayer, and with a heart that cries within him : Abba Father ! Abba Father ! Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ ! But let us commence the exposition of our chapter, verse by verse.

“ It pleased Darius to set up over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom ; and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was the first ; that the princes might give accounts to them, and the king should have no damage.”

You will remember, that two years before, the powerful kingdom of Babylon had fallen into the hands of the victorious Cyrus ; the city had been entered at midnight by the invaders ; the king, Belshazzar, who had gone out sword in hand to meet them, had perished ; and when the morrow’s sun arose, it was to illumine the commencement of the bloody empire of the Medes and Persians : the golden monarchy had ceased ; that of silver had begun.

Historians tell us, that *Darius the Mede*, (also called Cyaxares, the uncle and father-in-law of Cyrus, and the son of Astyages, or

Ahasuerus,) who was about sixty years of age, was not present with the army, but was in Media. Cyrus, the Persian, though the conqueror of Babylon, did not reign ostensibly either over the Medes or Persians; for both his father and mother were still alive. Therefore, after his victory, he paid a visit to his parents in Persia, and returned with his uncle to regulate the affairs of their immense empire. He held a review of his numerous armies in the plains of Babylon; and as I have already said, they amounted to 120,000 horse, 600,000 foot, and 2000 war chariots, armed with scythes. Formerly such accounts of the ancient historians were looked upon with great suspicion; but since the wars of Napoleon, there appears nothing incredible in them; for it was with a force little inferior that this great general crossed the Niemen twenty-four years ago, and entered the vast Russian empire, to his utter ruin. Cyrus, however, was obliged to cede the first place to his uncle, Darius, who reigned only two years over the Babylonian empire; and he himself departed to lead his army to the shores of the Red Sea. It was in his absence that Daniel was cast into the den of lions.

You can conceive that after the taking of Babylon, all classes were occupied with the predictions of Daniel. Had he not read the mysterious words on the wall, and predicted

to the king, the very night of his fall, and in the presence of his court, everything that had happened? Besides, he had long been known in the empire for his wisdom, his probity, his presence of mind, and elevation of character. He had displayed an incomparable talent for government; and it was known, that for half a century, he had served the great Nebuchadnezzar with equal success and disinterestedness.

Therefore, when the princes of the Medes and Persians had divided their vast empire into 120 provinces, to be governed by 120 satraps, and when they appointed over these again three ministers of state, to watch over the administration, and take account of all matters, one of these latter posts was assigned to Daniel. It has ever been a principal talent of persons of great genius to be able to select suitable men for their service. This was the case with Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Napoleon, and also Cyrus. And in your prayers, my friends, you should never forget to implore the Almighty to give the Spirit of wisdom to rulers and governors, that they may seek for their counsellors, and be able to find men fearing God and anxious for his glory. When the Lord would punish a people, he says: "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall reign over them," Isa. iii. 4.

"Then this Daniel was preferred above

the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him ; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”

From this last circumstance, we may judge of the exalted reputation which Daniel enjoyed, and of the gifts which he displayed even in his old age. What *an excellent spirit*, to use the language of the text, must he have possessed ! that is, not only what profound wisdom, vast capacity, and extensive knowledge ; but also what decision, integrity, and equanimity, for the princes of the Medes and Persians to think of putting at the head of so powerful an empire—a man, a stranger, a Jew, a captive, a servant of their enemies, and moreover an old man, now eighty-five years of age at least !

We may also observe, in passing, that Daniel must likewise have enjoyed, in his old age, an extraordinary vigour of mind and body, to be capable of sustaining the burden of such a government. God, no doubt, was pleased to confer these precious gifts upon his servant, to fit him to become the instrument of his purposed mercies towards the children of Israel. Daniel had long been their protector in this strange land ; and further, it was chiefly through his influence that Cyrus was to be led to publish the decree for the restoration of the people, and the rebuilding of their city and temple.

But what I would principally call your

attention to here, is the faithfulness of God towards those who give themselves up to Him in their youth. Ah ! he never forsakes such ; he preserves them amid all difficulties ; he leads them through the longest life, and suffers not the wicked one to pluck them out of his hand, John x. 27—30.

Thus did the Lord keep and preserve his servant Daniel, in Babylon, amid all the dangers and temptations of an idolatrous court ; all the fascinations of wealth and magnificence, and all the snares of power and greatness. Behold this governor of Babylon, this man who had governed for fifty years under Nebuchadnezzar ; behold this ruler of a third part of the empire, whom Darius proposes to place at the head of his vast empire—Where is he ? How is he employed ? He is before his window, on his knees, three times a day, praying and praising his God, and determining to give himself up to be devoured by wild beasts ; he holds his life as it were in his hand, and presents it, with tears of gratitude and joy, to his God and Saviour !

Yes, my children, and thus shall you be “kept by the power of God through faith,” even unto hoary hairs, and unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb, if you now give yourselves up sincerely to the Lord Jesus, as his people, his sheep, his redeemed. He hath promised.

And what I have just now said reminds

me of the good Polycarp, the fellow-disciple with Ignatius, of the apostle John. Like Daniel, at the age of eighty-six, he was condemned to be devoured by wild beasts, for the sake of Christ; but the lion not being ready, the people cried out, "Burn him! Burn him!" They tore down the doors and windows, and setting them on fire, burned him. This Polycarp had given his heart unto the Lord in his youth, and under very afflictive circumstances. He had been taken in war, and sold to an excellent Christian lady, named Calista, by whom he was instructed in the gospel. During his childhood and early youth, he had frequently heard the aged apostle John, with Ignatius and Paphias; and after the death of Calista, he went to spend some time with him in the vicinity of Smyrna, in which city he subsequently became the pastor of the Christians. When the soldiers of the emperor came to seize him in the country, whither he had retired, they were struck with his venerable appearance. He offered them refreshments, and meekly requested permission to retire for a short time for meditation; and he spent two hours in fervent prayer. When he had finished, they set him on an ass, and afterwards put him upon a car, from whence the magistrate threw him with such violence, that his thigh was broken. On his appearing before the pro-consul, he commanded him to

cry, “Down with the atheists!” which was the name at that time applied by the pagans to Christians. Immediately the venerable Polycarp, stretching out his hand, and raising his eyes to heaven, said with solemnity, “Down with the atheists!” Now deny Christ, said the magistrate, and I will release thee. “Eighty and six years,” said he, “have I served him, and he never did me aught but good; how, then, shall I blaspheme my King and my Saviour? If you know it not already, hear; I am a Christian!” “I have wild beasts prepared,” said the pro-consul. “Call them,” replied the martyr; “we Christians are determined not to exchange good for evil.” “I will tame you with fire, if you despise the wild beasts.” “You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour; but you know not of that eternal fire which is reserved for the ungodly in the day of judgment.”

But to return to Daniel, such being the excellence of his character, you can conceive the envy with which his prosperity must have inspired the great men of the Medes and Persians. What! a stranger, a captive, an old man of eighty-five, a Jew, a fanatic, who despises our gods, preferred before us!

“Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom;” some oversight, some act of injustice, or of partiality, or at least some

error ; but they could not find in him any occasion, or fault ; “forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any fault found in him.” What, then, did they do ? Then said these men, “ We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning his God.”

O ! what a testimony have their greatest enemies ever been constrained to render to the people of God ! They sought some fault in them, but they found none. Thus Louis XII., speaking of the Vaudois of Provence, whom the priests of Rome put to death in thousands, exclaimed with an oath, as he was accustomed, “ These miserable wretches are more honest than I and my people !” And such, my friends, should Christian children be. They may often find it difficult to live and act consistently ; they may meet with contempt, reproach, and ridicule, from other children with whom they are obliged to associate ; all this is hard ; but if they be Christians, indeed, they will remember that they must give no occasion to others to speak against them, “ except it be concerning their God.” Let them be gentle, diligent, and true ; respectful to their teachers, good natured and obliging to their companions ; kind and courteous to all. Then it matters not what others may say of them ; they may call them Methodists, hypocrites, fools, Bible-

readers—but let them answer like Polycarp, “I am a Christian!” Luke vi. 22; Mat. v. 11; 1 Peter ii. 12. But if, on the contrary, while we profess to be Christians, if, while we read the Bible, pray, and attend religious meetings, worldly people see us to differ nothing from others; if they discover in us the same faults and the same vices; slothfulness, levity, pride, ill-temper, bitterness, vanity, insincerity, avarice, and such like; O what a reproach do we bring on the gospel! Paul, writing to such professing Christians, says, “For your sakes is the name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles;” and our Lord himself hath said, “Whosoever shall offend (put a stumbling block in the way of) one of these little ones, better were it for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the depth of the sea.”

“Then these presidents and princes assembled together unto the king.” ver. 9.

There was, we may presume, either at Babylon or Susa, some assembly of the nobles of the empire, which the enemies of Daniel took advantage of, to plot his ruin; proposing this absurd decree to the king as a test of the obedience of the nations recently conquered by his arms:

“We have unanimously agreed, O king, that such a decree would be attended with the most happy consequences, inasmuch as

it would bind all your subjects more firmly to your government, and to your royal and sacred person, accustoming them to regard the king of the Medes and Persians as a being more than human, claiming their religious homage.”

Absurd and impious as was this proposal, dear children, it need not astonish you; such are the lengths to which the pride and wickedness of the human heart have gone. Did not Nebuchadnezzar claim divine honours? Did not Alexander the Great pretend to be a god, the son of a god? Did not the Roman emperors, yea, even the first Christian emperors, require themselves and their images to be worshipped? And, in our own day, does not the Pope lay claim to religious homage? He is called *Deus in terra*, God on earth; and at his consecration he is fumed with incense—he is placed on the altar of God, which serves him for a seat and for a footstool; his train fills the temple, the people kiss his feet, and all the cardinals cry, “*Venite, adoremus*, come, let us worship.”

But mark the falseness of Daniel’s enemies, ver. 7; they represent this decree as a unanimous decision; and they speak of themselves as the organ of the universal voice of the nation. Such is the practice of all party men, even in our own day; in their speeches, in their publications, in their warped and

prejudiced judgments ; *the nation*, that is, *we* ; the *state*, that is, I. We have all agreed to pass this decree.

The king, surprised in his imprudence, flattered in his royal pride, and not immediately perceiving the use which they designed to make of this decree against his servant, attached to it his seal ; and henceforth, according to an established usage among the Medes and Persians, this law was irrevocable ; no one, not even the king himself, could abrogate or modify it.

But let us hasten to ver. 10. What will Daniel do ? He has read the decree ; he has made up his mind ; he has given up his life to the Lord, and he determines to go to the king and to speak to him ; as the noble and loyal Dandélot, brother to the great Coligny, who had become a Protestant, that is, a Bible Christian, did to the king of France, the mortal enemy of the reformed : “Sire,” said he, “for twenty years I have cheerfully exposed my life for you in battle, and you have always found me faithful because you are my king ; I have another King in heaven whom I ought to serve, and whom I will serve. I trust He also shall find me faithful.”

How, then, does Daniel act ? Does he hide himself ? No ! Doubtless, in many cases, the Lord allows his children to shun persecution ; but Daniel does not choose to avail himself

of this liberty. He has an example to give ;
I must strengthen my brethren, saith he ;
God calls me to glorify him in death ; here
is the conflict, shall I decline it ? O blessed be
his name for so great a mercy ! O my God,
behold here am I ; what wilt thou have me
to do ?

TWENTY-SECOND LESSON.

DANIEL ii. 10—19.

My dear children, the first verse of our lesson this day would of itself afford matter for several meditations, and I cannot pass it over without calling your attention to it for a short time. It exhibits to us Daniel, the governor of Babylon, in the near prospect of death, kneeling before his window, praying and praising the Lord. The last verse, likewise, presents us with another scene, neither less affecting nor less interesting. It is, on the following day, early in the morning, the den of lions, into which the prophet had been cast.

Behind that stone which closes the mouth of the den, what is there? Lions, and a prophet of the Lord, an old man of eighty-five, who has spent the night there. And before the stone, what is there? the king of the Medes, the great Darius, an old man of sixty-two, who, unable to close his eyes all night, or to take any nourishment, has risen up before day, and run to the entrance of the cave; he approaches with trembling; and fears lest his anxious inquiries should be answered only by the roaring of the lions. “O Dan-

iel, Daniel," cries he, "thou servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Daniel, you remember, had been made one of the three principal governors of the new empire. The great men of the Medes and Persians, jealous of his success, had succeeded, by secret intrigues, and without his knowledge, in obtaining the sanction of the king to a decree, by which they hoped to effect his ruin. It was forbidden for any one to pray to, or ask a petition of, any god or man for thirty days, save of the sacred person of the king of the Medes.

Daniel knew nothing of this decree, but all at once he hears that the letters are written and signed by the king, so that it has become the law of the kingdom, and death is the penalty of disobedience.

What, then, does he do? He enters his house, and "his windows being open towards Jerusalem, he kneels upon his knees and prays."

He makes his decision at once; he feels that his hour is come, and that as the laws of the Persians are irreversible, those of heaven are much more so. My God, will he have said, the moment has arrived when thou art pleased to remove me to my rest by a violent death! Can I ever cease to call upon thee, my Saviour and my King! O

no ! Glory be to thy name, that after so long a life, thou callest me to honour thee by such a death ! Only give me strength ! forsake me not, until the day when “ they that sleep in the dust shall awake, and the wise shall shine like the sun, and like the stars for ever.” Such are his own words. Dan. xii. 2, 3.

“ Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went to his house and prayed.”

I will here relate to you an interesting anecdote of a little boy, which I heard from a brother minister, while lately on a tour in a neighbouring canton.

This dear child was one of my friend’s Sunday-school class, and he took such a deep interest in his religious instructions, that he persisted in attending the school, though for a long time he had been suffering from a severe pain in his knee. That he might not be prevented going there, he endeavoured as much as possible to hide his excessive sufferings from his parents, and he was particularly desirous to be present at the last religious meetings. In this, however, he was disappointed, for his leg became so bad that he was obliged to take to his bed. One morning the doctors entered his room and suddenly said to him, “ My good friend, you must take courage, for we are come to cut off your leg. We did not tell you before, not to give you unnecessary pain ; but the

operation is indispensable ; you must submit." Well, what do you think he did ? Ah ! he had the Lord in his heart. " Gentlemen," said he, with calmness and resolution, " not to-day ; I ask eight days to prepare, and to recommend myself to God." He seemed so decided in this delay that they complied. From that time he was engaged in fervent prayer ; he requested to be prayed for in church ; and when the eve of that fatal day arrived, he sent for the surgeon, and said, " Now, sir, I am ready for to-morrow ; and I wished to tell you that I was never so happy." God was with him, and will you believe it, the next day he never uttered a cry. The surgeon said to him, " My dear child, cry ; you may cry ; don't force yourself !" His answer was, " I don't want it ; I suffer very little,"—in such a remarkable manner was the Lord with him ! He is now well, and is able to go about ; and in every respect he manifests the consistent walk of a child of God.

Thus, then, it was that Daniel prepared himself, and doubtless, like this little boy, he could say, " I was never so happy."

The prophet was accustomed to pray three times a day, and notwithstanding the threats of man, he made no change in his habits of devotion. But, oh ! with what fervency did he pray before that window. On the present occasion, thinking that it was his last

day, and that he now beheld, for the last time, that beautiful sun of Chaldea, which was about to set beneath the horizon of Jerusalem ; but looking for the rising of a more glorious sun in the New Jerusalem ; for “ it has no need of the sun to illumine it, for the glory of the Lord enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Ah ! it is with such thoughts we would endeavour to pray every evening, were we more wise, and did we better know how to number our days. How much more attention, earnestness, sincerity, and love would we put into our prayers, could we say, “ This, perhaps, is the last time I shall pray in this world ; to-morrow, O my God, I may be before thy throne ! O my soul, prepare to meet thy God ! pour out thy thoughts before him ! ” Let us live,” said a friend of mine, in writing to me, “ let us live every day as if it were the eve of the day of Christ : this calculation will never deceive us, and it is the only way not to be taken by surprise.”

But to continue the explanation of our verses. The windows of the prophet’s chamber were open, so that the passers by, and especially his enemies who watched him closely, could hear, or at least observe him, while he poured out his soul before God.

But shall we say that Daniel is to be commended for having prayed with this appearance of ostentation ? Our Lord has warned

us against everything like parade in our devotions, Mat. vi. 5, 6. Did Daniel then act like the hypocrites?—No, doubtless, his conscience told him that he acted uprightly. He opened his window for the same reason that the hypocrites would have shut it. He did quite the reverse of those whom our Lord speaks of, as desiring to be seen praying, that they might receive the praise of men. But if, instead of honouring them for their prayers, men mocked, insulted, and put them to death, would hypocrites in that case desire to be seen on their knees! Assuredly not; on the contrary, such persons, in the days of Daniel, would have shut their windows, and bolted and barred them, and let down their blinds too; and behind these blinds and bolts they would not have imitated the example of the people of God, and prayed; but they would rather have said, like Peter, in the moment of his unhappy fall: “I know not what thou sayest; I am not one of them.”

The window of Daniel’s chamber, we are told, was open towards Jerusalem. You know, I trust, the reason of this. It was, that while he prayed to God, he desired to be reminded of the promises of God. Jerusalem no longer existed; seventy years before it had been destroyed, and now it presented nothing but an unsightly heap of ashes; but when he addressed these prayers to the Lord, Daniel turned toward the city

of the promises, to show that the ground of his confidence was not any virtue, or excellence, or merit of his own, but solely the promises given to the people of God in the first era of the world ; renewed to Abraham ; repeated to David ; and, as it were, embodied in the temple, the altar, and the whole tabernacle worship which typified the Saviour of sinners, and bore testimony to that “plenteous redemption,” which is “in him,” Psal. cxxx.

In opening his window, Daniel had in view that prayer which Solomon offered up at the consecration of the temple. Read over that beautiful portion of scripture, and it will throw much light on the conduct of this man of God in thus turning his face towards Jerusalem, when he prayed in Babylon, 1 Kings viii. 46—49.

And so, in like manner, my dear children, we, when we pray, should look towards our heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, towards our great High Priest, Christ Jesus, towards the true tabernacle, from whence the Lord himself heareth prayer ; and in doing so, it is as if we said, “O Lord God, hear us from heaven, the habitation of thy holiness, not for our sakes, who have deserved nothing at thy hands, but for the blood, the sufferings, the merits, the intercession of Jesus, our Almighty Saviour.”

But let us continue the explanation of ver. 10. How did Daniel pray? “He kneeled

upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

There are three or four particulars connected with the prayers of Daniel which I would wish to dwell upon, did time permit.

1. He prayed, we are told, "as he did aforetime." He did not wait for times of danger to engage in this exercise; he did it while he was at the head of the vast empire of the Persians. There are many persons who live strangers to prayer, except when they have been visited by some affliction, some attack of sickness, or some other trouble. A father, a mother, a husband, a child is at the point of death! ah! then, perhaps, you will see them often on their knees; then they will be frequent in prayer. But why was it not so a few days before? Why will it no longer be so when the storm has passed away? Why? ah! rather ask the corrupt and sinful heart of man. It was not so with Daniel: that venerable old man gave himself up to continual prayer for himself, that he might be kept amid the temptations of his government; for his family, that they might be enabled to glorify the name of the Lord; for the church, that the Lord would have pity upon her afflictions, and build again the walls of Jerusalem. Neither was it so with the centurion, Cornelius: that brave officer, we are told, "prayed to God always;" and

the Lord sent an angel to say to him, “Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms have come up as a memorial before God.”

2. Daniel *knelt three times a day* before his window. Here again, my friends, we have an important lesson. There are two characteristics which you will invariably find in the religious practice of men of God: constancy and regularity. We are desired to maintain a constant spirit of prayer; to pray without ceasing; but we are also directed to have certain fixed hours in the day for secret retirement and prayer to God.

When a child is converted, his little heart is given to prayer; he prays continually when he is alone, whether he goes into the town, or walks in the country, or is occupied about his business. O my God, he will say, how great is thy goodness! be with me and preserve me from evil! Bless all those around me! O Lord, how wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all! Thou hast made the flowers of the field, the lilies, the world, the sun’s immensity! When I consider the heavens the work of thy hands, the moon and the stars which thou hast made: what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?” O my God, I am going to my work, make me diligent and laborious; put away from me all evil thoughts, strengthen my memory, enable me to please my masters and my be-

loved parents ! And when he is among his companions : O Lord, in our recreations, let us not do anything displeasing to thee ! Yes, the Christian prays habitually ; but, at the same time, this disposition does not satisfy him ; he feels the necessity of having moments set apart for this holy exercise, as he has hours fixed for his meals and for his several avocations.

These two habits of the Christian life, that of praying without ceasing, and that of praying at stated hours, constancy and regularity, ought to spring up and grow together. They mutually assist one another ; and are necessary to each other's development. Wo to that man who neglects to consecrate certain moments to the concerns of his soul and of eternity, under the pretext that he prays without ceasing ! No, no, he does not pray without ceasing, if he nourishes not in him the spirit of prayer by regular devotions. And wo also to him who says, "I pray three times a day," but has not an habitual disposition to pray. No, he does not pray at stated times, if he has not a spirit of prayer ; in such a case his prayers are not prayers at all ; they must be cold, wandering, without life, and without sincerity.

The pious among the Israelites were accustomed to retire three times a day into some solitary place, to pour out their hearts before God ; and they chose for this purpose

the hours when the sacrifice and oblations were offered up in the temple, that they might be more forcibly reminded that their prayers were accepted only for the sake of the Lamb, which taketh away the sin of the world. Hence Daniel prayed and made supplications to God "about the time of the evening sacrifice." chap. ix. 21. David, likewise, followed the same practice, Psal. lv. 17. Again, in the Acts of the Apostles, you will see that this was the usage of pious men under the New Testament. Follow through the course of the day the brave Cornelius, the centurion of the Italian band, and you will find that not only did he pray to God continually, but that he had stated hours of prayer. In chap. x. 3, you will see him praying to God, with fasting, about the ninth hour of the day, that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon; and in the same chapter, ver. 9, you will find Peter going up on the house-top about the sixth hour, that is, at mid-day, to pray. In Psal. cxix. we find the Psalmist, in his old age, rising up at midnight, to engage in private devotion, ver. 62, and again 147. But to continue.

3. Daniel prayed *on his knees*. Such is the attitude which becomes the Christian when he prays. Some persons have an objection to kneel, in prayer, because they think this practice savours somewhat of popery! True, if it be before men or angels; but if it

be before Jesus Christ, and as an expression of what the heart feels, then let us rejoice to imitate the papists. In my opinion the attitude appears to some too humble. Poor children of condemnation and death ! the Lord pardon them ! They know neither who they are, nor what God is ! Ah ! could they obtain some glimpse of the divine majesty, they would feel even this attitude to be too proud ; they would desire to prostrate themselves upon their faces, they would remember, that when Jesus Christ prayed in Gethsemane, it was not merely on his knees, but it was stretched on the ground, with his face in the dust !

Stephen prayed on his knees ; Paul prayed on his knees. When he prayed with the elders of Miletus, previous to his departing from them, it was upon his knees : "he kneeled down and prayed with them all," Acts xx. 36. When the disciples who accompanied out of the city of Tyre to the sea-shore, joined with him in prayer, they all knelt down upon the beach, Acts xxi. 5. Solomon kneeled in the presence of all the people, when he offered up his prayer at the consecration of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 54. When his father David, the man after God's own heart, prayed, it was on his knees, Psal. xcv. 6. In a word, when our master prayed for us, it was on his knees !

4. We are told, "he prayed and gave

thanks before his God, as he did aforetime,” he prayed “with thanksgiving,” Phil. iv. 6. And thus should the Christian do, at all times, in trials, in dangers, and in the hour of death ; for the true believer will always have reason to thank God ; and if we are not able to join thanksgiving with our prayers, we shall surely ask amiss.

I imagine I see this venerable old man kneeling before his window. He does not think it enough to say, “O my God, keep me, and supply me with needful strength !” but he praises, magnifies, and gives thanks unto the Lord ; “all that is within him blesses his holy name.” “O my God, when I think of thy mercies, they are more than I can tell ; they are more in number than the sand upon the sea-shore. I praise thee for my long life —I bless thee for calling me to terminate my days by martyrdom !—I bless thee for thy mercy, in keeping me, when, as a child, I came to Babylon ; and for counting me worthy to suffer for thy name. Ah ! I long to depart ; I wait for mine inheritance. Thou forgivest all mine iniquities—thou healest all my diseases—thou crownest me with loving-kindness and tender mercies.”

One word more only would I remark on this verse. The Holy Spirit does not merely say, *Daniel praised God, but Daniel praised his God* ; teaching us the spirit of adoption and of holy joy, in which this aged servant

of God poured out his heart before the Lord. He was *his God*. “O God,” said he, like one of his ancestors, “thou art my God.” I am thy child, thou art my Father, thou art my portion for ever, O my God ! Thus Daniel prayed.

A crowd soon gathers round his palace—the people are excited—the rumour is spread throughout Babylon, that this haughty Jew—this insolent old man, from whom a far different example of submission might have been expected, had dared to trample on the king’s command. The chiefs of the kingdom approach Darius, and say to him: “Hast thou not signed this decree?” He answers, “the thing is sure, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.” “Well, then,” continue they, “that Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day, as heretofore.”

On hearing these words, the unhappy Darius discovered, too late, the snare into which he had fallen. He saw that the object of it was to ruin his prime minister, and we are told “he was sore displeased with himself;” yea, that “he set his heart on Daniel to deliver him;” he did everything he could to rescue him from the effect of that persecuting edict to which he had so unwarily been induced to affix his sanction. But to no pur-

pose. The principal men of the nation assembled, and came in a body to the king, and said: "Sire, wilt thou overthrow the monarchy? Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree or statute which the king establisheth may be changed." We think we hear the answer of the chief priests and rulers of the Jews to Pilate, when he demanded, "Why, what evil hath he done?" "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar: away with him, away with him! crucify him, crucify him!"

From such facts, my dear children, we learn what need kings and all those in authority have of the prayers and intercessions of the people of God.

At length the unhappy Darius is constrained to give way: he orders Daniel to be cast into the den of lions. The venerable old man is seized—he is led like a criminal—guarded, no doubt, and loaded with chains—he appears before the king. Do you not imagine you see this fine old man, with his hoary locks, his mild but decided expression, his generous brow, his air of nobility, calmness, and lofty candour?

I endeavour, also to realize the feelings, at this moment, of the thousands and thousands of Jews in Babylon who are looking forward to the accomplishment of the pro-

mises made to their fathers, and with the book of Jeremiah in their hands, waiting with so many prayers the seventy years of their captivity.

Since the fall of Babylon, according to the predictions of scripture, they regarded the elevation of Daniel to the government of the new empire, as a means prepared by God for their deliverance ; what a trial of their faith —the cruel punishment of their protector, and this persecution of their nation by these masters ! But at the same time what a noble lesson ! this venerable old man, choosing to die rather than give up praying and confessing the hope of Israel, the true and living God ! What an influence must such an example have exerted !

Perhaps there were among the Jews, especially among the poorer classes, some who uncharitably blamed the pious Daniel for living among heathens, and in the midst of magnificence ; but now, rash mortals, no longer judge ; who are ye that ye should condemn another man's servant ? behold that noble, that faithful old man going to death, rather than cease to pray ; behold that martyr ; behold that man of prayer ; go, and do thou likewise.

At length he is led forth to be devoured by the wild beasts. But hear the language of the king of the Medes, at the moment when he sees him about to depart. What a conso-

lation to Daniel, to hear such words from the lips of a heathen king : “ Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.” Yes, no doubt his heart responded, my God will surely deliver me, one way or another ! O my God, be merciful to this poor king !

He is led away ; the door is opened ; he is thrown in ; a stone is laid against the mouth of it ; and the seal of the king and of his lords, who no doubt distrusted him, is affixed thereto.

The lions, according to custom, had been kept a whole day without food, to render them more ferocious ; but to make still more sure of his death, they left the prophet for a whole night in the den ; they opened it not until the following morning.

The martyrdom of this servant of God has frequently reminded me of that of the excellent Ignatius, the first bishop of Antioch, who, like Daniel, at the age of eighty, was exposed to wild beasts, for the sake of Christ. Being thirty-six years of age at the time of St. Paul’s death, he had associated much with the apostles, especially with St. John, at Smyrna ; and he was exceedingly attached to the pious Polycarp, of whom I spoke to you in my last lesson. He was very fond of sacred music, and it is said that he first introduced the use of responses into the service of the church, in the east. When the emperor Trajan made his triumphant entry into

Antioch, Ignatius appeared before him and spoke to him of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. "His kingdom!" exclaimed the emperor, with disdain, "the kingdom of Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate!?" "Yes, his kingdom, the kingdom of Him who nailed my sins to his cross, and who enables those who bear him in their hearts to tread down the malice of Satan under their feet." "And do you bear in your heart Him that was crucified?" "Yes," answered the venerable old man; "for it is written, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them.'" Then the king, without further delay, hastened to pronounce with a loud voice this sentence: "Since Ignatius confesses that he bears in his heart Him that was crucified, we order that he be removed to Rome, bound between soldiers, and that he be cast to wild beasts, for the amusement of the people." On hearing these words, Ignatius, his countenance beaming with joy, exclaimed, "I thank thee, O my God, because thou hast counted me worthy, like thine apostle Paul, to wear a chain for thy name's sake!" Immediately he was consigned, in chains, to ten soldiers, to be conveyed across the whole empire to Rome. Trajan hoped that this long journey of the martyr would inspire with terror all the Christians of Europe and Asia, who regarded Ignatius as the greatest of the successors of the apostles; but God made use

of it, on the contrary, everywhere to cheer the hearts of those who were cast down by persecution. The ship which conveyed him stopped for a few days at Smyrna, where Ignatius had the pleasure of embracing his beloved Polycarp, and from whence he wrote letters which are still extant. Arrived at Rome, he was delivered to the prefect of the Pretorium, who selected for the day of his execution, a grand festival, when all the people assembled in the Amphitheatre, (the famous Colosseum,) would expect brilliant shows of gladiators. On the morning of his execution, Ignatius kneeled down in the presence of his guards, and like Stephen, addressing himself to Jesus Christ, besought him to bless his church, to unite his people in love, and to put a stop to persecution. He was speedily conveyed to the arena of the Colosseum. On entering this astonishing building, he beheld its three tiers of immense arches, filled with a multitude of people, supposed to amount to 89,000, and rising in rows like steps of stairs, to the height of 150 feet. The lions were immediately let loose ; they were ravenous with hunger ; as soon as the people saw them, they raised an enthusiastic shout of applause, and in a moment the old man was devoured ; but his blessed example will continue for ever, and he being dead, yet speaketh.

But let us return to the two other old men,

to whom our lesson this day calls our attention ; I mean the old king Darius, returning to the palace in the evening without Daniel, and the venerable prophet descending by his order into the den of lions.

Imagine the state of the unhappy king. What a wretched day, what humiliating thoughts, what a gloomy, frightful night ! He reflects on the goodness, the meekness of Daniel, his noble countenance, his dignified appearance, his wisdom, his disinterested affection, above all, his holiness, his elevation of soul, his faithfulness to that God whom "he served continually." How could he sleep while the aged Daniel lay at the bottom of the den, his flesh devoured and his bones crushed between the teeth of the ferocious lions ? How could he take pleasure in the music of his palace ? He seems rather to hear the roaring of the wild beasts and the cries of the prophet reproaching him with his ingratitude and cruel neglect. Ah ! thought he, he ever served me faithfully ; and what may I not expect now from that mighty and terrible God who denounced to Belshazzar, upon the wall of his festive saloon, his own death and the ruin of his empire ? He is unable to take his place at table in the evening ; he has no more repose ; his night is passed in the anguish of disquietude and the agonies of remorse. Ah ! far from me

your instruments of music ! be silent ! I have sinned ! you break my heart !

At length he rises ; but it is “*before day* ;” he does not send some one to the entrance of the den ; he goes there himself, “very early in the morning ;” our text tells us, “he goes there in haste ;” he trembles ; shall he call Daniel ? he fears to receive for answer nothing but horrible roarings.

However, as he approaches the den, and before he reaches it, he cries, with a lamentable voice, Daniel ! Daniel ! He has not lost all hope : Daniel has been so nobly faithful to his God, and the God of Daniel is so mighty ! “Daniel,” exclaims he, “servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions ?”

We shall see, next Sunday, whether he received an answer.

TWENTY-THIRD LESSON.

DANIEL vi. 16—28.

(*The ordinary minister being absent this day, his place was supplied by one of his colleagues.*)

THE minister who instructs you, being detained this morning by other duties, is unable to give you the usual lesson. I shall therefore request you to repeat what you have learned.

I am unwilling to interrupt the course of the instructions which you are receiving on this book ; but not being prepared with the portion of scripture which has just been repeated, I will put a few questions to you as children to whom the Lord has given some understanding in his Word. Besides, the term is far advanced.

What were the feelings of king Darius, when Daniel had been thrown into the den of lions ?

He was very sorry.

It was against his wish that Daniel had been condemned. You remember that he had said to him, as he was going to punishment, “ Daniel, Daniel, thy God, whom thou

servest continually, he will deliver thee.” The following night he had passed in the most painful agitation.

What do you remark in the language in which the king addresses Daniel, when, on the following morning, he approaches the den, to ascertain what had become of him?

That it is very respectful : “ O Daniel, servant of the living God ! is thy God, whom thou continually servest, able to deliver thee from the lions ? ”

Is not the prophet’s answer to the king also characterized by the same respect ?

He says to him, “ O king, live for ever.”

Remark how he ascribes his deliverance to God, and to his having sent his angel. “ My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths.” The Bible, my friends, connects the name of God with every event which happens. Thus it tells us it was by the will of God, that the bears devoured the children which mocked the prophet, 2 Kings ii. 40 ; and it was also by the will of God that the lions’ mouths were shut for Daniel while they were permitted to devour his enemies. St. Paul, in Heb. xi. 33, makes an allusion to this deliverance of Daniel, and assigns as the cause of it the faith of the prophet, a faith mighty through a divine energy. Here the act of shutting the mouths is not ascribed to the wild beasts themselves, though they were living creatures, and their

hungry mouths obeyed their natural instinct ; but they are here represented as machines, because it was the power of Him who made and governs all things—it was the Divine power, that governing according to its will this savage instinct, in the one case, opened the lions' mouth, in the way to Bethel, to devour the disobedient prophet, and in the other shut it, in the lions' den in Babylon, that the life of a faithful prophet might be rescued from the grave.

How are we to understand the words : “for as much as before him innocence was found in me ?” Do you imagine that Daniel was one of those who think themselves free from sin ?

No, for there is not a man upon earth that sinneth not.

You know it is an acknowledged rule, that where a great doctrine is formally established in the Bible, it cannot be shaken by a passage which may seem, at first sight, to oppose it.

You remember what St. John teaches, 1 John i. 8 : “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” No man ever made such humble confession of his sins as Daniel. Why, then, do we sometimes hear the servants of God in the Bible justifying themselves ?

It is not that they want to establish their own righteousness ; but where they are ac-

cused falsely on any subject, they think it necessary to clear themselves.

Certainly ; and in such cases it would not be humility in them to believe themselves guilty.

King Darius, we are told, was “ exceeding glad ” to behold Daniel again. Ah ! it is, indeed, at all times a subject of great joy, when God repairs our faults, and counteracts the evil, by preventing its consequences and bringing good out of it. You remember how Joseph explained to his brethren the providential history of their crime, and of his misfortunes. “ As for you, ye meant evil against me ; but God meant it unto good ; God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance,” Gen. l. 20 ; xiv. 17. He represents himself to his brethren as a messenger of God, as an angel sent down into Egypt, that he might, one day, become the means of their deliverance and preservation. This, surely was a great subject of joy. It is very cheering to us to know that God governs all things, and that his sovereign providence is everywhere ; but it is still more consoling to know, that even where evil has happened, God is able to bring good out of it, as he draws a man out of a pit in which he seemed in danger of perishing.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES.

Centuries before Christ.

Years B. C.

4000	The Creation of Man.
3000	Enoch translated.
2000	{ Noah dies. Abraham is born.
1000	Solomon consecrates his Temple.
900	Elijah preaches.
800	Isaiah is born.
700	After two years, Hezekiah dies.
	Kings { Nebuchadnezzar reigns in Babylon. Pharaoh-Necho in Egypt.
600	{ 600 Kings Jehoiakim at Jerusalem. Prophets { Jeremiah prophecies at Jerusalem. Daniel at Babylon.
	{ Ezekiel at the river Chebar.
500	{ 500 Kings Jehoiakim. The second temple of Jerusalem consecrated by Zerubbabel. Prophets { Haggai. Zechariah.
400	Malachi, the last of the prophets, dies.
300	The Greco-Macedonian Empire is divided towards the four winds of Heaven.
200	The Romans commence the destruction of the third Empire.
100	{ Pompey the Great and Julius Cæsar } are born, { the one to take Jerusalem, the other to commence the Roman Empire.
1	Jesus Christ is born.

Centuries after Christ.

Years after J. C.

100	{ Second persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperors. Saint John dies.
200	Fifth persecution throughout the whole empire.
300	Tenth persecution. Twelve years after the Roman Emperor declares himself a Christian.

Years after J. C.

			Vandals. Ostrogoths. Visigoths. Gepidæ. Heruli. Lomibards. Franks. Burgundians. Suevi. Alans.
400	{ Ten barbarous nations speaking a kind of German, make themselves masters of the Roman empire, and divide it among themselves. They are		
500	Clovis, king of the Franks, makes war upon Gondebaud (king of the Burgundians, at Geneva.) His wife Clothilda, niece of Gondebaud, whom he carries away from Geneva, persuades him to become a Christian.		
600	{ The Pope in the West and Mahomet in the East } began at the same time.		
700	The Popes oblige the whole world to worship images.		
800	Charlemagne, king of the Franks, is crowned Emperor of the Romans, by the Pope.		
900	Alfred the Great dies in England.		
1000	The Turks establish four sultanries on the banks of the Euphrates.		
1100	Jerusalem taken by the Latins.		
1200	Constantinople taken by the Latins.		
1218	The Papists besiege Toulouse, and butcher the Albigenses.		
1300	{ The Pope excommunicates the king of France. William Tell in Switzerland. Geneva free, writes its franchises.		
1400	John Huss and Jerome of Prague, are burned alive (by the Papists) for Jesus Christ.		
1453	Mahomet takes Constantinople, and destroys the Eastern empire.		
1500	Commencement of the Reformation.		
1516	The blessed reformation of the church begins in the West.		
1600	{ Henry IV., in France, dies in 10 years. Elizabeth, in England, dies in 3 years. Theodore Beza, at Geneva, dies in 5 years. The Escalade against Geneva, in 2 years. The Protestants persecuted in France. Voltaire born six years before. J. J. Rousseau born in Geneva, 1712.		
1800	{ Bonaparte, First Consul, having conquered at Marengo, is crowned by the Pope in 4 years. Missionary Society, founded in England 9 years before. Bible Society, four years after.		

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

Before J. C.

610. The good king Josiah dies, aged 37, after a reign of 31 years.

At his death, Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, the priest, is 40 years of age, and has already prophesied 18 years.

Ezekiel the priest 14 years of age.

Daniel, prince of Judah, 11 years of age.

Pharaoh Necho, at the end of three months, leads away Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, into Egypt, and puts in his place Jehoiakim.

609. Jeremiah having uttered menacing prophecies in the temple, is seized by the priests, Jer. xxvi., xxvii.

608. Urijah, the prophet, is slain by Jehoiakim, 2 Kings xxiii; 2 Chron. xxvi.

607. The young Nebuchadnezzar, is associated with his father on the throne.

He lays siege to Jerusalem, Dan. i. 1.

He carries away Daniel and other young nobles, to Babylon.

606. Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh, and takes him prisoner at Carchemish, on the Euphrates, Jer. xxv. 1, 3; 1. 1, 4. Jeremiah having prophesied 23 years, predicts a desolation of 70 years, Jer. xxv. 1, 3, & 1. 1, 4.

605. The father of Nebuchadnezzar, dies in the Spring.

Jehoiakim (in the ninth month) cuts with a penknife and throws into the fire, the book of prophecy which Jeremiah had given to Baruch. God denounces against him terrible judgments, Jer. xxxvi. 9, 22.

604. Daniel is presented to the king.

The terrible dream of the image is sent to Nebuchadnezzar.

Jehoiakim revolts against him.

Nebuchadnezzar sends his armies to destroy Judah, 2 Kings xxiv. 2.

603. Daniel and his friends are promoted to high offices in the state.

601. Cyaxares called in Scripture, Darius the Mede, destined by God one day to overthrow with Cyrus the empire of the Medes and Persians, is born among the mountains of Media.

604. Cyrus destined by God to inflict severe judgments, is born among the mountains of Persia.

599. Jehoiakim, after three years and a half resistance, is loaded with chains, and ends his days miserably. His body is cast out in the highway like that of an ass, 2 Kings xxiv. 2 Chron. xxvi; Jer. xxii. 18, 19.

599. Jehoiakim his son (ill-treated Jeremiah) who succeeds

Before J. C.

him, only reigns three months and ten days. He is loaded with chains and carried away captive into Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar, who took Jerusalem in the eighth year of his reign, 2 Kings xxiv. 12.

Zedekiah, his uncle, son of the good Josiah, is established on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, to whom he swears fealty in the name of God, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, 13; Jer. xxii. 18, 19.

Jeremiah has his vision of the figs, Jer. xxiv. 1.

595. *Ezekiel* the priest, the son of Buzi, begins to prophecy at the age of 30 years, by the river Chebar. He sees the heavens open and has visions from God.

590. Zedekiah, in the third year of his reign, revolts against Nebuchadnezzar, who marches with his whole army against Jerusalem, Ezek. xxiv. 1, 2; xvi. 12, 20; xxi. 22, 27; Jer. lii. 4; 2 Kings xxv. 1; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.

Nebuchadnezzar withdraws from Jerusalem for some time, in order to encounter the king of Egypt, Jer. xxxvii. 5.

589. Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh.

Jeremiah is shut up in the court of the prison.

588. Jerusalem after a frightful siege (Jer. xxxiv.) is taken on the seventh day of the ninth month. Aug. The temple is burned, the king's sons are slain before his eyes; he himself is deprived of his sight and carried away to Babylon.

Jeremiah is taken out of the dungeon by order of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xxxix. 2. lii. 8, 12; 2 Kings xxv. 3, 4, 8; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17, 21.

Obadiah prophesies.

587. Jeremiah is carried into Egypt, Jer. xlivi. 6, 10, 13. He then predicts the taking of the kingdom, by Nebuchadnezzar.

584. Nebuchadnezzar carries away new captives into Chaldea.

583. *The three friends of Daniel* are thrown into the fiery furnace.

572. Ezekiel prophesies that God will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar, as his hire for his trouble in his war against Tyre, Ezek. xxix. 17, 20.

The powerful Tyre taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*, after a siege of thirteen years.

Egypt and its immense treasures fall into his hands.

571. His heart being lifted up by so much prosperity, he learns, by a terrible dream that he shall shortly lose his reason, and become like the brutes for seven years, Dan. iv.

570. Nebuchadnezzar becomes deranged.

563. He is restored, and gives God the glory.

562. He dies after a reign of forty-three years, and of unrivalled prosperity. His successor Evil-Merodach, re-establishes Jehoiachin in the 12th month, of the 37th year of his captivity, Jer. xxv. 12; 2 Kings xxv. 27.

558. Cyrus, son of a Persian prince and Median princess, unites with Cyaxares the Mede, against Babylon. He kills the king of Babylon in battle.

555. Belshazzar, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, ascends the throne.

Daniel has his famous vision of the four *wild beasts* in Babylon, Dan. vii.

Before J. C.

553. At Susa, the capital of Persia, Daniel has his vision of the rough he-goat, and of the king of Græcia concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression which causeth desolation, viii. 1, 13.

541. Cyrus having conquered all Asia, *lays siege* to Babylon.

538. Belshazzar, on the night after his grand feast, sees the figure of a man's hand write upon the wall. Babylon is surprised and taken the same night. Cyaxares, called Darius the Mede, uncle to Cyrus, aged 62 years, reigns over the united empires of Medes and Persians, Dan. v. 31.

Daniel fasts and prays in reading Jeremiah.
He receives the prediction of the seventy weeks.

537. Daniel is thrown into the den of lions.

536. Cyrus succeeds Darius the Mede.
The decree of Cyrus for the restoration of the Jews.

535. First altar rebuilt at Jerusalem, Ezra iii. 17.

534. Laying of the foundation of the Temple, Ezra viii. 13.
Daniel's last vision, Dan. x. xii.

530. Cyrus dies.

515. Dedication of the Temple, Ezra vi. 14, 22.

464. Artaxerxes becomes king.

459. He marries Esther.

457. He issues a decree in the seventh year of his reign, in favour of Jerusalem, Ezra vii.; Dan. ix. 24.

445. Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem.

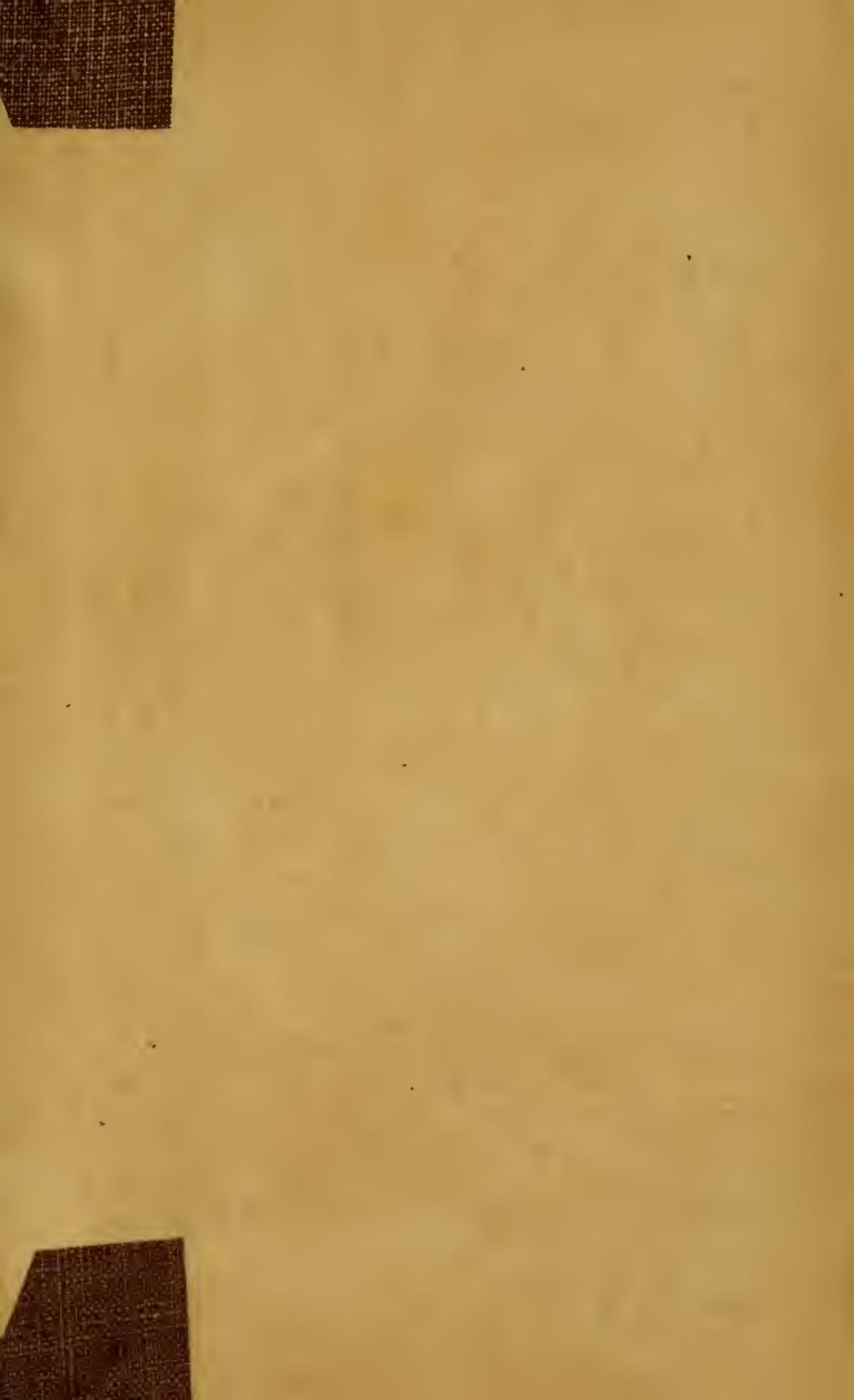
420. Malachi, the last of the prophets, preaches at Jerusalem.



DATE DUE

[REDACTED]

JUN 15 1968



BS1555.8 .G275
The Prophet Daniel : considered in a

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00076 2379